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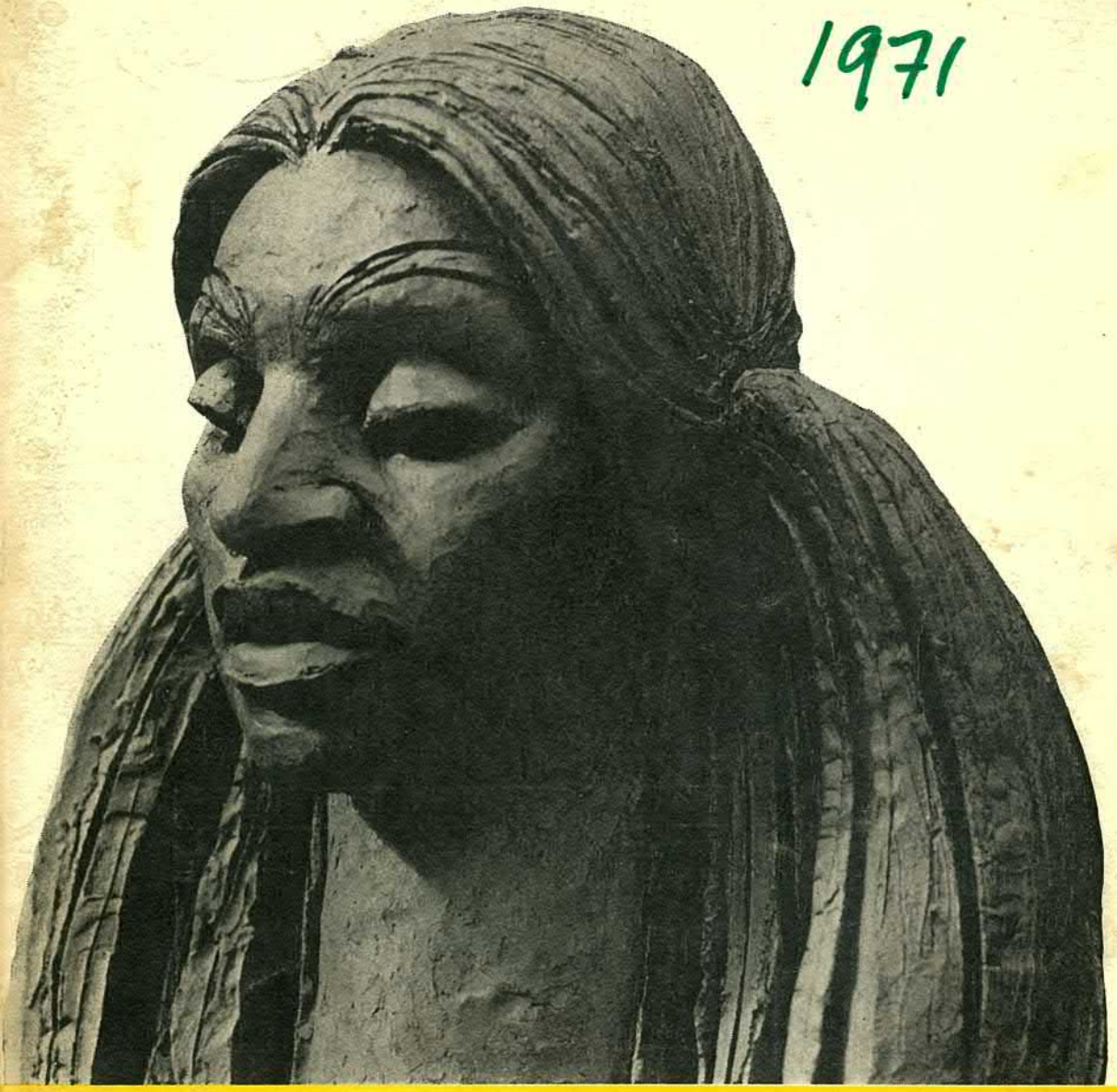

NEW ZEALAND potter

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contents

VOLUME 13 No. 1 AUTUMN 1971

NEW ZEALAND POTTER is a non-profit making magazine published twice annually in Autumn and Spring.

Subscription rates: Within New Zealand: $2 per annum, post free.
Australia: $2.20 Canada, U.S.A. $US2.40
United Kingdom: 22/-
Other countries: $US2.40

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Printed by
Deslandes Ltd.
Wellington

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Kenneth Clark, born and educated in this country, went overseas in the navy in 1943. Subsequently he studied at the Slade School of Fine Arts and then studied pottery at the Central School of Art and Design.

He now runs a pottery in London with the assistance of his wife, Ann Wyn-Reeves, who is a potter in her own right. They make decorated earthenware. Much of their work is commissioned by architects for both public and private clients where interiors in bright colours are required.

Kenneth Clark also designs for commercial potteries and does some teaching.

He is the author of 'Practical Pottery and Ceramics' and 'Throwing for Beginners'.

Photo: D. Carson-Parker

Kenneth Clark speaks

The Potter put some questions to Ken Clark. We are grateful to the Design Council for taping and transcribing the interview.

On Pottery in New Zealand

You've seen a wide range of New Zealand pottery against its own background for the first time in ten or so years, what is your general impression?

My general impression is of an extremely high standard in domestic stoneware, as high as anywhere in the world. The other impression is of the availability of materials: people go and dig their own materials and therefore the knowledge of materials is far greater with the experienced potters here than with their equivalents in Britain. New Zealand potters have an added advantage in that the raw materials are less finely manufactured so you get much richer, more natural, results than you would by using commercially bought materials as in Britain. I have also noticed that New Zealand has a much wider and greater public acceptance in use and patronage of hand made pottery than has Britain. I think potters in New Zealand are aware that import restrictions on chinaware and ceramics have had a bearing on the demand for their work.

Are there any signs of distinctive character to be found in the pots you have seen?

I think this is beginning to emerge. It will naturally grow through materials used, because quite a lot of clays, glazes, and additions to glazes are distinctive to certain parts of New Zealand, and will help to build up an indigenous style. The making side of this rapidly growing craft in New Zealand has been more influenced by throwing than by any other method so its pottery rather than ceramics. Its been under a Far Eastern influence and not a continental tradition. What I find lacking is use of idiomatic decoration; that is apart from the decoration which comes naturally from the way the materials are used. When there is decoration, it nearly always comes from people who have had a Fine Arts or graphic training. This is because in these courses one is trained to use the eyes, the thinking and the imagination as well as the hands. Most potters here have got to the stage where their ability to use their hands is very high, but they now need to use their eyes to look, to see, to begin to think about decoration, whatever form it takes, even if its purely textural. They've got to understand that decoration has a definite role to play and is not rather accidental and therefore undesirable. It can be highly intentional — of course it can be over intentional and become stylised and stiff, lifeless and meaningless. But with the rich background we have here, both visually as well as materially, there is beginning to emerge a style and an approach that one might call indigenous. Its beginning to show in other crafts notably in some of the batiks I've seen. Some of the large ones have designs derivative from indigenous New Zealand subjects. I think this is developing slowly in New Zealand, but without some sort of visual drawing or design training for ceramists it is going to be a slow process.

On education

At the present time because of New Zealand's small population and relatively few industries it would probably be unwise to start a large department or training centre for ceramists, but I think something should be done, not only with the serious full time potters, but perhaps with some of the more adventurous part-time potters who want to do other things besides thrown domestic ware. Rather than going to a great deal of expense in setting up schools or departments, more could be done by means of a specialised short course. The immediate answer I think would be to run for say a period of three weeks or a month or even a little longer, a course for a specially selected group of people. They need not be just studio potters. Lecturers from teacher's colleges and art schools, people in education and industry could benefit from a very wide ranging, intensive, course to cover not only the techniques of ceramics, but the visual, the philosophical and the design elements of it as well. If you pick people of the right calibre and feed them this really rich diet they would be of more benefit to the country than a limited number of graduates from a lengthy college class. Care would need to be taken in the selection of candidates for the courses thinking about where their influence would be felt, where they were going back to, as well as their ability in handling clay. They need not necessarily have a high standard of technical ability, but they would need to be able to take full advantage of a rich and possibly high-pressure course. To do this would not be easy. There would have to be the right person to run it. A number of other

people would have to be drawn in — indigenous potters as well as possibly people from overseas. With a balanced team of four or five people, something definite could be done to inject new insights into the approach of people working in ceramics here.

On use of ceramics in buildings

Do architects in Britain use ceramic designers to any extent?

Yes. There are certain difficulties in that people have very definite ideas on colours and what they would like to see where. Nine times out of ten the architect comes to us when the building is nearly finished when it is too late. Its really only possible to incorporate ceramics when the building is at the planning stage: when the architect says in the beginning that a certain interior will have this or that treatment, and the interior designer gets his brief in time (the architect usually handles this aspect in New Zealand), and he comes to see us in time (ceramic designer), so that the whole thing is worked out in stages and when the work is wanted you have it ready. If there is a hold-up someone its losing thousands of dollars.

Where do you consider ceramics are appropriate in a building?

It depends on their reason.

Do you like ceramic murals or would you like to see ceramics used in other ways, for instance for door handles?

I think I can answer this question simply. First of all, I see ceramics for what they are and this is such a wide field. There must be a reason for putting them there or wanting them in a particular place. Having decided to have them, the next decision is what form will they take. Having decided what form they will take, the ultimate step is to make them. I'm utterly against an architect saying, 'There's a wall over there, we'd better put something on it. We'd better put a mural on it.' I like to approach the problem from another angle, such as occurred the other day when an architect with a building in mind was designing an entrance. He wanted something rich in colour. It was for elderly people so it musn't be too modern. He wanted texture. He wanted it to integrate with adjoining areas. And finaly he wanted it to relate to the rest of the building. Now what is going to be the best form of ceramic design to do these things?

If you can write you can draw

Margaret Harris

Many people would not agree with these words of Kenneth Clark. But after attending a class given by this exponant of modern decorative pottery, they may find, to their surprise, the statement to be true. Kenneth Clark—purple velvet cap on head and dandelion pinned to dark brown jersey—has the colourful personality of the born teacher and many potters will have been stimulated by the classes he held recently throughout the country.

We attended the Saturday programme of the Wellington potters' seminar (appropriately held in the new Teachers College at Karori where Doreen Blumhardt's craft room had everything laid on for potters.) There were thirty-two observers and pupils, six of them men,

Dunedin. Class in progress. Each person using his or her own initial as subject matter for design.

which is probably about the average proportion of men to women in our pottery groups.

Getting the ideas for designs

Ken Clark pointed out that before ideas come out, they must go in. This is done through the eyes. The designers visual images must be carefully observed. This requires more than the superficial glance of recognition. True seeing is looking for the character.

To show what he meant he picked up leaves and flowers he had gathered on the way to the class. He put these on a white background under glass so that the shapes were clearly defined. With careful observation the unique character of each was clear to see. Ken Clark warns that there is a tendency to want to bend a design based on a natural form to fit the shape. Leaves grow straight. They will look better on a pot straight.

Two main points about design to keep in mind.

- Design is shapes on shape.
- The space between is almost as important as the shape itself.

So if you make an interesting shape, you will leave an interesting shape.

No squitty witty dots on pots

It's important to fit the design to the form, which means filling out the whole form. Think big and you will act big.

The class got to work with a thick brush of black paint on white paper. They were asked, within a clearly defined outline to draw their house or the place they lived in. They could

use any interpretation they liked, the only restriction was that they had to fill their shape. Some people found difficulty in reducing their concept of their house to a few lines.

The second part of the excercise on a new sheet of paper within the same shape, was to transfer the house outline into the negative, i.e. fill in the white with black and leave the black white. This exercise proved more difficult as it needed concentrated thought on the spaces outside the lines.

When all the drawings were pinned in pairs on the walls it was a surprise to see some of the very interesting themes for designs that emerged.

No right or wrong way—you decide what is right for you.

However there are some learned techniques, Ken Clark demonstrated some. Decoration can be done at any stage, on wet clay, on leather hard or dry clay, on biscuit or after glazing—or in a combination as he pointed out by referring to photos of pots on the wall from ancient Greek to modern Picasso. He personally prefers decorating on dry clay which doesn't leave hard edges.

He showed methods of scratching with different tools, putting on colour in different strengths, and the difference of weight of line with wax resist.

'Contrast is the key to interesting design. It gives richness and variety.'

Contrast of direction.

Contrast of colour.

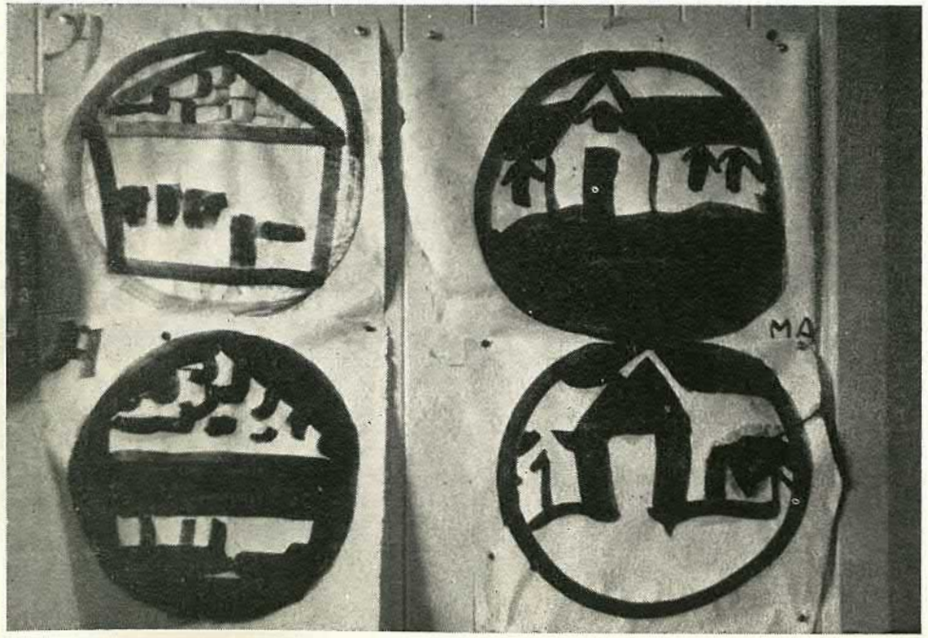
Contrast of tone.

Contrast of weight (thickness of thinness of line).

Palmerston North. Selection of clay and paperwork based on personal initials, using basic pigments.

Wellington. Drawings showing negative and positive spaces, based on personal visual experience of environment.

Auckland. Paper work showing reversal of image.



Photos: Kenneth Clark

Ken Clark check list for teach yourself techniques.

- Observe and react.
- Sketch with brush on paper.
- Discipline to a shape and practise it.
- Test glazes on tiles to get accurate recipes.
- Decorate on good pots.

For some people the message was not readily recognisable. It was a pity that potters were asked to bring pots in biscuit to practice decorating on, because in some of the sessions no use was made of them. Furthermore it gave a preconceived idea of what they would be doing on the course, and when their expectations were not realised they were disappointed. The course was in fact aimed at improving awareness of graphic design and providing new insights. The way the course was conducted was disconcerting to some, but to get people out of a rut and get them questioning the very basics of design, often requires the shock tactics that Ken Clark used. Answers were given to specific questions about glaze recipes and so on in the evening sessions.

Armed with this information potters should have been able to go home and experiment to work out formulae that was right for them and then take a new and critical look at how they could improve their own work.

Photos: Kenneth Clark

Dunedin. Class working with alphabet initial shapes.

Christchurch. Student working with brush on clay cylinder.

Dunedin. Decorating clay after paper work.

For the new generation of potters

Roy Cowan

The choice of kiln size must be a compromise. For the learner, a small kiln represents less capital outlay, and the more frequent firings of small batches of work permit a quicker process of trial and adjustment. However in the smaller sizes there is greater difficulty in achieving favourable placement of ware in maintaining the correct path in firing and the cost per cubic foot and in attendance time is higher. So for the more experienced potter whose methods have become more stabilised the larger kiln is more economical and in fact easier to stack and fire well.

The design presented in 1965 took account of the compromise, being the smallest 'big' kiln. Many have been built and enquiries still come for the long out-of-print issue so here it is again, with some improvements. The kiln is blower-aspirated and is fitted with burners permitting clean firing, oxidising if required to 1150-1200 C. or with reduction to the practical limit of oil fuel in air supplied at normal temperature, finishing temperatures in the ware of from 1300 to 1350 C. being the rule.

As shown in the drawings there are further choices. A single chamber only requiring firebrick in the chimney, or two. If two, the second can be for biscuit only, with red brick chimney, or, the second may be provided with openings and passages in the floor to take burners, permitting staged firing. The chimney may be placed at the end or to one side to suit, and of course the whole thing can be built the other way round. A sloping site may be utilised to raise the kiln a foot or so above the working platform.

The kiln is designed around paired 18" by 12" shelves with 3" gap, 3" to 4" spacing from the end walls and from 6" to 7" where the flames rise. An internal height of 38" to 40" excluding the vault will produce a volume of about 21 cubic feet. In construction the measurements are controlled by 9" brick units with their spacing so length by breadth will be about 28" by 42". Calculations based on an ideal rate of flame circulation and therefore of air and fuel consumption show that this kiln will require 3 gallons of oil per hour at full rate, 28 gallons to go to Cone 10 at 100 C. per hour, and a further 12 to 14 gallons will raise a second chamber to the same level.

SITE AND FOUNDATIONS

Assume that sheets of flame and palls of smoke will be coming from the stack, and site the kiln to avoid killing trees or neighbours.

Nothing of the sort will happen if you build and fire correctly and your neighbours will be interested, not annoyed. Ideally you should be able to fire—in fact many do fire large kilns which can go through 100 or more gallons of fuel in a day without any one next door being reminded that they are operating. The kiln may well be in the open, but should be within say two or three yards of a building in which an electrical blower can be sited, containing noise and removing any worries when firing in wet conditions.

Kilns do not, in spite of their weight, impose heavy ground loads. The stress comes from the ball of heat which forms underneath them, which will crack any

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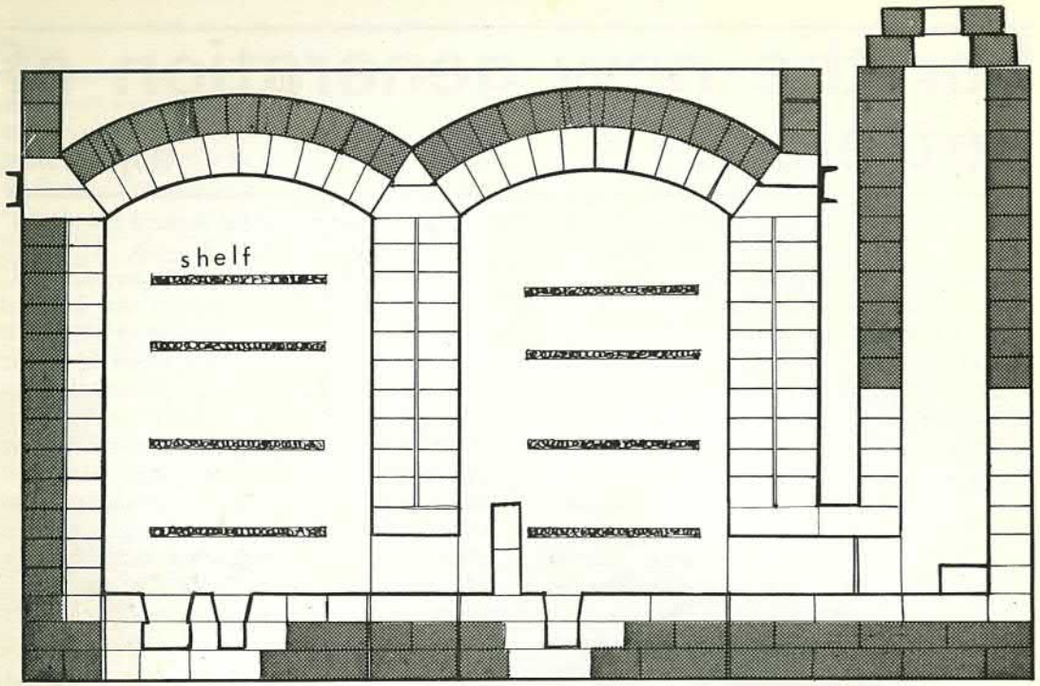
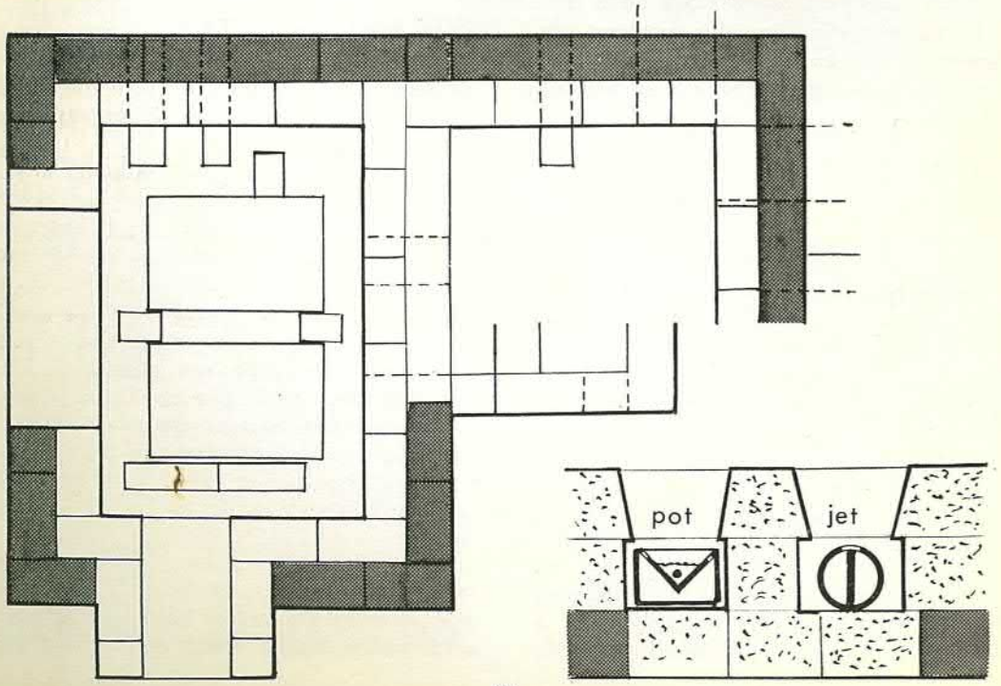
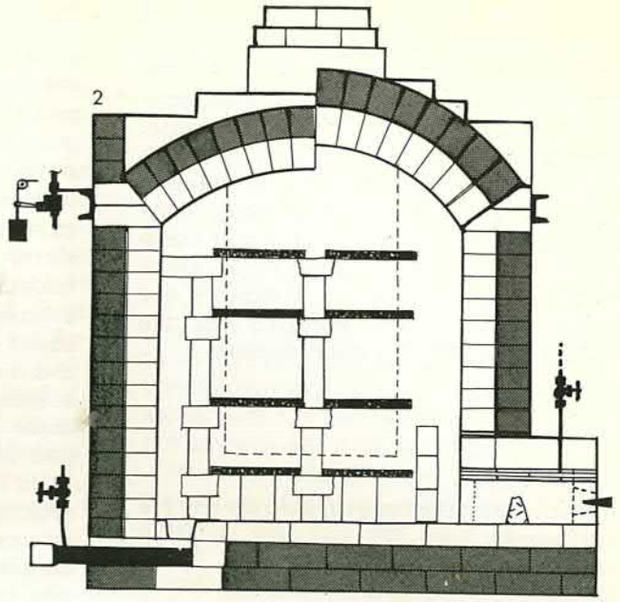




1. Plan and elevation, red bricks shaded. One half of the plan is for a single chamber firemouth type kiln. The detail shows the pot and jet burners in their recesses.

2. Sectional elevation showing firemouth and jet type firing systems, 36" and 27" radius arches, the method of supporting shelves and the cut-off valve.

2



concrete slab. The best foundation is a firm well drained clay surface. This may be surfaced with a thin concrete panel of $1\frac{1}{2}$" to 2" thickness. If the kiln is to be in a building at ground level the part of the floor slab carrying the kiln should be separated by a one inch slot from the building floor slab. If it must be on a structural floor slab it should be platformed with steel substructure not less than two feet clear of the floor. This way you will avoid cracking the building in half.

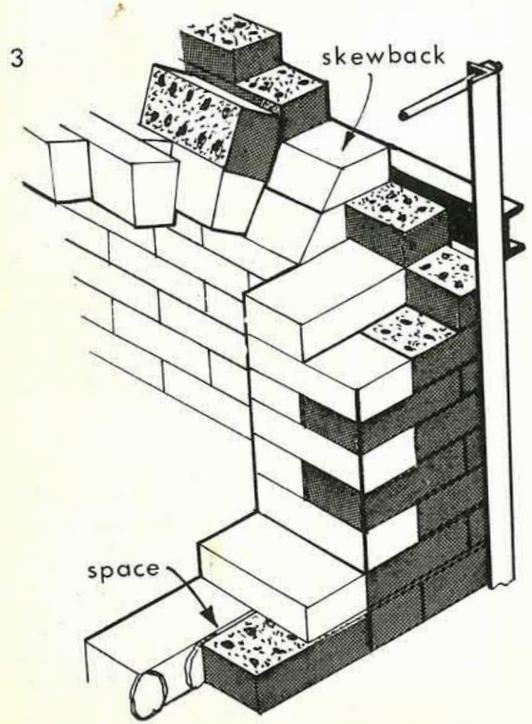
If the kiln is indoors no combustible material should lie within two feet of the chimney where it passes through the roof. Horizontal radiation is most severe from the wicket face.

THE MATERIALS

There are two main classes of materials, the traditional heavy bricks, and modern lightweight insulating refractories, light insulating concretes with associated radiation suppressing plating which permit much thinner construction, vast weight saving and some improvement in fuel consumption as less heat is absorbed. Modern style is the rule for units built for sale as packages. The initial cost is much higher than that of brickwork, and the actual gains in operation are marginal, for, whatever the materials, the main expenditure in firing goes in heating the stream of gas which passes through the kiln. A fraction only is lost to structure and even less goes to fire the charge. Whatever the construction, the contained heat has to come out after firing, and at this stage it is only necessary that the rate of cooling should not exceed the safe rate for the ware—about half the rate of heating, that is, double the firing time to cool, provided that the kiln should not be opened if the contents are over 200 C.

To detail the 'traditional'; standard grade firebricks, 30% Alumina content, maximum service 1350 C., such as the New Zealand Huntly H30 are most succesful in these kilns. Bricks of denser, more vitrified or finer grained structure such as the Huntly HA40, or ex gas works or foundry silica refractories withstand the rapid thermal cycles and steep temperature gradients imposed in small kilns less successfully. Brickwork not facing flame may be standard red, the perforated type being quite suitable.

3. Brickwork summarised, and part of the steel work.



PLACING THE BRICKS

Mortars in kiln work serve not to bond the mass solid but to bed the bricks well and to seal the faces against excessive gas leakage. Standard grade fireclay, two parts, to one firebrick grog, 16 mesh or finer is used for the firebricks which are damped and tapped down on the fireclay slurry to about one-eight inch on the bedding face. The vertical joints may be a little wider. At 1300 C. each brick is about one-eight inch longer. To help offset this movement the vertical joints are given a sealing strip of mortar only and their outer side is backed by an anti-leak pad of fireclay. Clay mortar may also be used for the outer red brick work, but a slightly stronger bonding cement which retains the plastic quality of clay mortar consists of one half clay mortar as above, one half two of sand to one of cement. Both components of walls must be built together and be kept level as there are interlocks at openings. A space not over one-half inch is left between skins. The feathers of mortar extruded from joints are allowed to bridge this space so that it is compartmented, assisting its insulating function. All bricks are coursed so that vertical joints are never opposite in either plane.

BRACING

The minimum essential is the bracing to take the arch thrust, and for this small kiln 3" by 1½" channel steel, set to back up the two courses of wedge shaped bricks (skewbacks), is ideal. Half-inch round steel will provide adequate draw bolts.

As the tie rod will run awkwardly across the wicket opening further cornering steel work is often fitted to transfer the tie rods.

As mentioned, the bricks expand on heating, and with time a shunting process

opens up the structure which becomes leaky and perhaps less stable. Further steel bracing, not of such stiffness as to be a strait-jacket is applied to maintain integrity. The kiln is cornered with 2" by 3/16" angle, linked at the foot by welded 1½" by ¼" flat strip. Above, the arch bracing channels, and drawbolts complete the frame. In a further step, the cornerings are projected above the kiln top and carry two cross pieces of light angle which can serve as attachment for roofing iron.

Finally, if the full scheme is adopted, it might be built first, then serving as an accurate former for the kiln, but before welding make a trial layout of bricks, remembering their spacing.

CONSTRUCTION

The interior floor system is left to the last. Number one course is all red brick. In the second, the pattern of burner openings appears and in the third the composite fire brick-red stages begin. In the next three or four courses the various systems of openings according to the format being constructed appear. The short row of firebricks laid across the sill of the wicket are in this position called 'headers', while the bricks laid lengthwise are 'stretchers'. Note the interlock of bricks at the wicket, alternate firebrick course being turned out. The work continues to course 16, upon which the arch is placed.

A further comment upon the choices of design already mentioned. The kiln might be built as a single chamber with ordinary firemouths, as shown in half of the plan and front elevation. In this case the arch should be run across the width—the elevation shows alternative arch heights. If however the jet fired version is the choice the arch may be turned over the short span as there is no difficulty of projecting firemouths.

ARCH

Both flat slabs and castables appear as simpler solutions but give trouble in service, therefore an arch is recommended There is a right radius for each space to be spanned, that which turns through an angle between 70 and 100 degrees. Manufactured arch bricks are numbered to indicate the radius, which is taken to the outer side of the brick. The type used in this kiln is the Side Arch brick, designed to lie flat in the arch, as opposed to the upright End Arch brick, resembling a keystone, and the 27" or 36" radius models will provide the right arch form.

Place an arc of your bricks on the ground leaving one-eighth inch mortar spacing, and find the number of ranks which will span, also the shape of the wooden frame needed to centre the arch. At either side the angle with the chord is that which must be cut in the skewbacks, the bricks which transmit the arch thrust to the steelwork.

Perhaps no arch bricks are available—they may be cut. It is unnecessary to adze away all the taper face, in a small arch sufficient lock is obtained by a short taper provided it is carefully made.

Prop the centering in place, place the skewbacks butted to the steel work. Continue building the back wall and add the arch courses butting them against this wall. Withdraw the centering on completion of the arch. Slight adjustments may be made at this point by tapping the moistened bricks. The outer layer is simply red bricks, laid with tapered mortaring. As finished, the arch butts against the back wall and comes out over the short return walls on either side of the wicket. The top surface of the kiln loses heat more rapidly than other surfaces, to counter which the top might be covered with insulating material such as vermiculite or pumice. Raising the outer red brick wall courses to form a

level top will provide a shallow tank to contain such material.

FLOOR

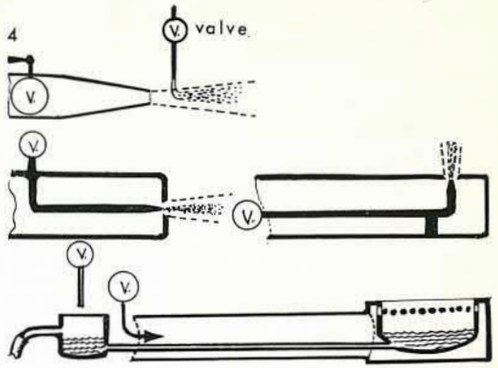
Two courses all red are laid, firebrick being introduced where burner openings expose these layers, and firebrick only is used in course three. All these are laid loose or with just a touch of mortar for firm true bedding, but with lateral freedom. A tight floor will expand and push the walls out, so after some service bricks should be lifted and cleared of the accumulation of grog which filters down.

THE CHIMNEY

Three feet per second represents the designed rate of flame flow in the glost. Fifteen feet a second is accepted as the rate for flues and the stack, and in the calculation of areas for these parts allowance is made for the fall in temperature of the gases as they travel through the kiln, contracting somewhat in volume. Serious errors in the dimensions of these parts are a common source of difficulties in firing. Under sizing limits the capacity of the kiln to draw air, and, while it might heat well initially, there is a characteristic refusal to reach high temperature, additional fuel merely producing a denser atmosphere and smoke but no more heat (in fact, less). An over dimensioned kiln is often difficult at the start through excess air cooling and attempts to hold back the fast rate of firing results in oxydised patches.

FIRING SYSTEMS

The simplest blower-assisted system, which will function with a vacuum cleaner, requires the addition of two firemouth tunnels to the kiln and is one step from the drip-feed system. The oil delivery pipes, each fitted with a small



4. Burners. The 'blown drip feed' (top) and the pot burner (bottom) require control of air and oil. The horizontal and vertical jets will function on constant air. The run-off fitting on the pot burner prevents over-fuelling which might allow burning oil to run back through the air line.

control valve, come through the firemouth roof and the falling stream is blown inwards and partially atomised by an airstream from flattened nozzles fitted to branches of the air delivery, each of which should have a simple control valve. The air blast is directed through a quarl or a reduced opening to the firemouth. To start up, a fragment of brick is placed in the path of the jet to serve as a hot combustion point, raked aside when the firemouth—bag wall region is glowing.

Some smoke and vapour from evaporated but unburnt fuel may cause objections. Another is the fierce concentration of heat and wear about the firemouths which will also occur with any of the more refined horizontal burner systems.

The simplest of these, requiring air at 3" water gauge, is illustrated. Here the fuel air mixture is good enough to allow smokeless combustion, once the starting

method outlined above has been followed. The development of this idea is to address the jets through the floor of the kiln in such a pattern that the kiln has no marked cool spots, and bring the whole to red heat and thereby ignition point for oil spray by pre-heating with pot burners, which can be made to produce whatever type of flame is required regardless of ambient temperature. As the pot burners, in the form in which they have been developed for use in kilns, provide all the combustion air, no additional draft is needed and the kiln at this stage may be almost enclosed. A characteristic of all chimneys is that they come up to full displacement quite early, when the gas temperature is hardly up to 300 C.—the subsequent great rise in outlet temperature does nothing. This means that excess draft is set up when the potter is trying to heat evenly but at reduced rates. In passing, the range of control required—'turn-down' in heating parlance—is from four to five to one.

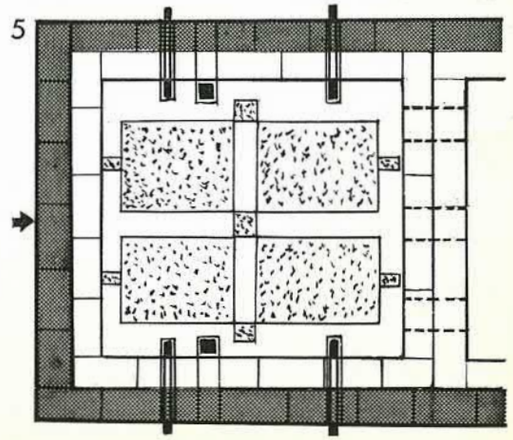
If the kiln is built with two (or more) identical stages the second chamber may be either biscuit or glost. Ports are provided in the second chamber to which jet burners can be transferred after the first chamber has finished, and a second chamber may be fired for rather less than half the fuel and time. Note that this can be done with a chimney sized as for a single chamber, but if actual overlapping is to be tried, the chimney must be sized against the sum of the two chambers. The large-bore stack with air inlets at the base and a loose corbelling of bricks at the top is effective in 'stoving' long flames —only a clear shimmer of heat should come from the top.

LARGER CAPACITIES

A section of the plan of a larger kiln, which in other respects develops as for the smaller model, is illustrated. There are four 18" by 12" shelves, four jet and two pot burners, three spaced ports 6" wide by 9" deep leading to an identical second chamber, or, a single flue 9" square leading to a stack. The internal dimensions are $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 5 bricks, about 41" by 46". A useful packing height above the lowest shelf would be 36" to 45" plus the vault, and if one adds 6" from shelf to floor and 9" of flooring the total interior height becomes 51" to 60" and the capacity 50 to 65 cubic feet.

The four jet arrangement works well up to sizes around seven by seven bricks, when a further heating point (arrow in the plan), on the outermost side, will assist heat distribution. Shuttle type kilns may similarly be provided with equalised heat flow by the introduction of long jet pipes, inserted through passages in the understructure which come into alignment when the car is in place.

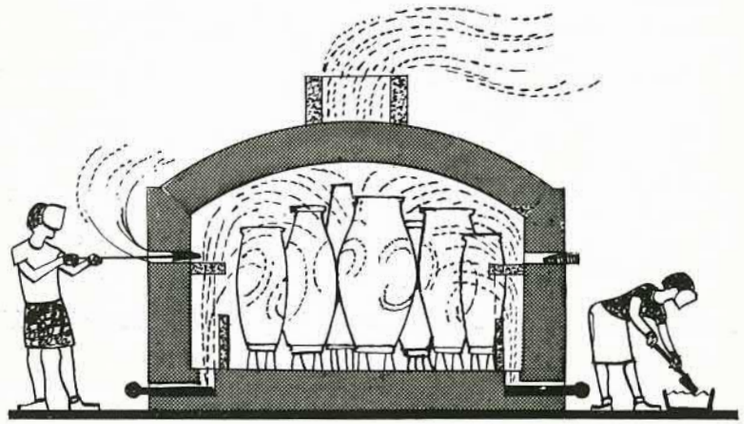
5. Part plan of four shelf kiln.



SALT GLAZING

The substantial heat reserve required to turn a charge of salt into gas is traditionally furnished by the bed of hot solid fuel in the firemouth, or by the locally super heated zone around horizontal burners. In drip-fed kilns the actual firemouth is a zone of comparatively low-temperature evaporation, and in jet fired kilns there is no hot spot. In the latter, openings at higher level with a platform just within work well, but a quick action gate valve which can be flipped to stop for the moment any adjacent burners will improve the potter's chances of survival.

The reaction requires considerable heat energy and as it also results in additional volumes of gas it normally proceeds with a rapid loss of temperature, the pattern being to salt and then to recuperate. Additional heat reduction may be brought about by the practice of damping to contain the vapour. An alternative practice which has been used to achieve salted effects at sustained or rising energies is to provide the kiln with sufficient draft capacity to displace from 50 to 100% over normal, brought in during salting. More salt is used, there is more vapour and flame but there is a more rapid enrichment of the results and time at maximum temperature is greatly reduced.



FIRING COSTS COMPARED
OIL, GAS & ELECTRIC

At 22 cents a gallon, one cent more than current prices, a 30 gallon firing will cost $6.60, nearly 48 therms of heat being delivered. At 35 cents a therm, an assessed figure based on the sliding scale applied to the Standard Rate in Wellington, the gas cost of the same firing would be $16.80. At the special rate allowed for heating devices it would be $14.40. Electricity at full domestic rate costs 28 cents a therm but fewer therms would be required in a fully-enclosed kiln.

Setting the pots

Primitive firing

by Auckland potters

John Parker

Photos by Neil Grant

An afternoon spent on a primitive firing at Mr B. Oliver's farm was an experiment Auckland Studios Potters look back on with pleasure.

It was suggested that the pots should be hand built with the clay opened by the addition of about thirty per cent grog. It was also suggested to use burnishing and coloured slips. To fire the raw pots a frame of wood was first constructed with dry willow and covered with green willow leaves. The pots were carefully set on the frame with the mouths facing into the wind. A covering of green leaves was placed on top of the pots followed by dry cabbage tree leaves then a layer of thin branches and finally thicker branches, making a high stack.

The firing was started and the fire was allowed to burn down until the pots were visible through the ashes. They were removed for inspection while still hot. The few casualties were because the odd wet pot exploded and damaged others. The parts of the pots

Firing in progress

After the bake

that were exposed to the air in most cases went an orange brown colour. The parts that were in contact with the unburnt wood turned black and showed signs of resin flash marks.

An attempt to salt glaze was not a success, however the salt did turn the colour of clay to purple.

Five twenty minute firings were made in the afternoon. The temperature reached would probably have ranged from between 700 C. and 900 C. The day ended around eight o'clock with a barbecue supper. Later, at an evening meeting slides of firing were shown and the pots fired were on view to see what could be learned from the experiment. □

Pots showing through the ashes

Pot, 12 x 12 approx.

LEAD GLAZES

WAIMEA CRAFT POTTERY LTD.
NELSON

Dear Editor,

The enclosed reply from the Department of Health is important information to all potters. It is in reply to my suggestion to them that glazes that are toxic, or likely to be, such as raw lead glazes, should be banned by regulation from food containing vessels. Such regulations exist and are to be specifically extended to cover glazed pottery food vessels. It is now an offence to use raw lead glazes in these conditions. I have also pointed out, quite firmly, that these regulations should be applied to imported ware and appropriate testing of certifying machinery should be inaugurated.

There is, of course, no limitation on using raw lead glazes on any other pottery or decorative ceramic that has no food containing function.

Yours sincerely,
JACK LAIRD

'There has long been, in the Food and Drug Regulations 1946, regulation 54, a prohibition on container materials which yield to the contents any toxic material and additionally there has been a specific test for acid resistance in enamel ware containers. This is referred to in regulation 53 of the 1946 Regulations and the details are set out in the Second Schedule to the Regulations. This depends on filling the utensil with boiling 0.5% citric acid. It is proposed that in the general revision of the 1946 Regulations the test be applied to all glazed earthen-ware food containers and utensils, in addition to those with enamelled surfaces, in case any distinction might arise as to "enamel ware" and glazed containers.'

An Electric kiln mystery

by Raeburn Laird

The name Laird is usually associated with Jack Laird of Waimea Pottery. In this case Raeburn Laird is a Wellington potter living in the Hutt Valley.

When discussing oil firing versus electric firing, the general impression is that electric firing is a sterile, automatic, lifeless process—or is it? My experience would suggest differently.

Locality barred an oil kiln. Natural gas was too far off. After discussing my needs with a local kiln agent I ordered a 4 cubic foot electric kiln 15" x 27" deep and a pyrometer.

Installed, admired, loaded with dry ware thrown with a mixture of Hume's clay and Mapua fifty-fifty, my first firing commenced. I left it on the lowest setting all night to help dry the kiln, turned it up gradually until 1000° was reached. At no time was the increase more than 100 degrees an hour—mostly it was under. As expected with a new kiln it steamed furiously, so both top vent and spyhole were left open during firing, but closed while ware 'soaked' before turning off.

When it was opened I was hardly able to believe my eyes. I had a kiln load of pitch black pots!! Overfired? Pyrometer not working? The cone 05 by the spyhole barely bent, belied this.

After much talk and consultation of every available book on the subject, we were sure that my kiln had done what everyone says electric kilns don't do — reduce. But why? A fluke from a new kiln?

Another bisque firing was done, this time leaving spyhole and vent open all the firing time, and during cooling also. Results—bottom half of the kiln black shading up to terra cotta near the top. Ah, perhaps the bottom shelf, a West German coated silicon carbide shelf, was the culprit?

With difficulty I glazed some black bisque and fired it in a 1 foot cromartie kiln. Glazed results were normal and the black body reverted to dark brown.

I contacted the local agent and a marathon discussion started as to the cause of this iron reduction. The effects of reduction on clay bodies are fully covered in Daniel Rhodes book 'Clay and glazes for the potter'. Because of the successful test firing in the cromartie kiln, I decided to go ahead and glaze fire in the 4 cubic footer. An unadventurous brown lead biscilicate glaze was used and was put through a twelve hour firing cycle to 1100 degrees with vent and spyhole open at all times. The results were a disaster — khaki, black, bubbly green pots firmly imbedded in pools of glaze. Exposed clay—black. Reduction again!

At their request a black bisque and a glazed pot was sent to the supplier by the local agent. I received a toll call . . . yes I had reduction because I was using inferior local clay. To assist me to fire such clay it was suggested that I fire at the rate of 50 degrees an hour between 400 and 600 degrees, and open the door at 300 degrees. The shelves were given a clearance. They could not be the cause of reduction.

We were at once at loggerheads. I maintained that the kiln should be constructed to fire iron bearing clays for which an oxidising atmosphere was necessary. I made some local enquiries and found that the 2 cubic foot models and the 4 cubic foot models had the same kind of ventilation, i.e. 1" x $\frac{3}{4}$" vent and 1" x $\frac{3}{4}$" spyhole. I tried a second glaze firing . . . 14 hours firing cycle at 50 degrees an hour to 400-600 degrees. At no time was the kiln on full, as position 3 and 4 maintained a steady rise. Results . . . similar to the first.

The pyrometer was next tested and found to be accurate.

Roy Cowan confirmed that my problem was one of reduction. He suggested that more vents would help me fire this clay, as the kiln was very effectively encased.

The supplier's agent drilled a second spyhole near the base of the door. It was, they stated, a standard kiln and reduction was due entirely to me and my materials. I am convinced that my predicament is summed up in Kenneth Clark's book 'Practical Pottery and Ceramics' Chapter 8 where he says,' when firing electric kilns it is very important to have adequate ventilation, not only in the early stages when moisture and gases are given off, but throughout the firing. Lack of ventilation can soon create a reducing atmosphere which can have adverse effects on bodies, glazes and the elements.'

I had a bisque firing, all three vents open, door opened at 300 degrees for one minute to clear the atmosphere, 50 degrees an hour between 400 and 600 degrees, 100 degrees an hour to 980. Apart from a slightly opaque atmosphere, terra cotta bisque emerged. I had learned to bisque fire the kiln.

Feeling confident I glazed again going through the above firing sequence until 1100 degrees. At no time was the kiln on full. I noted that the air flowed unevenly.

Pots that were within the air flow, interesting, but still overfired. Reduced look in the shaded area. Clay body again black. Dispirited, I packed up and enjoyed the Christmas holidays.

Facing 1971 refreshed, I decided to change to Mapua fifty-fifty clay and try a stoneware firing. I went through my usual gamble of opening the kiln door at 300 degrees, 50 degrees an hour between 400-600, but when I reached 1175 I turned the kiln on full. On reaching 1275 degrees (by the pyrometer), loud noises were made by the kiln which ceased when the switch setting was lowered to 4. I was unable to hold the temperature for soaking, so I turned off. Later when unloading, I found that the bottom back shelf 14" x 11" x $\frac{5}{8}$" had melted between the props and fused the elements. Cones at the top were well bent. The glaze looked underfired at the top of the kiln and once again the clay body was black. It was quite apparent that there was a wide variance in temperature from top to bottom when the kiln was on full.

Roy Cowan's suggestions for correcting my firing troubles decided us to alter the kiln in the following ways: by putting another vent in the floor of the kiln or rear wall: by installing a switch to control separately the bottom set of elements; by moving away from lead frit glazes to the middle range of glazes . . . cone 4 to 6.

STOP PRESS. Some weeks later.

An extra top vent, another near the base of the back wall, the existing simmerstat controlling the two side banks of elements only, a new simmerstat for the bottom elements and my troubles seem over.

A successful test firing using a pyrometer in the bottom front spyhole loaned by the local agents, numerous cones placed strategically throughout and an even temperature was obtained with the bottom elements seldom on. □

NOTE. The electric kiln referred to in this article is definitely NOT that trusty friend to so many potters, the McGregor kiln, an ad. for which we are proud to carry in this issue.

STOP PRESS

With the bottom elements at two settings lower, and extra air vents bored, Raeburn Laird reports the kiln is now firing well.

After this experience the manufacturers have discussed the merits of including a switch or simmerstat for the bottom elements in future models of this kiln, and it seems likely this will eventuate.

The School on the Coast

News from Yvonne Rust in Greymouth suggests that the proposed School of Ceramics is likely to eventuate there after all. A Greymouth based Rotary group are committing themselves to the projects of a Pottery School for N.Z. This is forward looking and very timely.

So far, the growth of the pottery movement has come about through enthusiasm, dedication and sheer joy of making and doing. This has been its strength.

A School of Ceramics developing from this background must not become confused over the very different roles of Education and Industry. Attention must be focussed on the TRAINING of designers and practitioners. Later on industry could well arise as a RESULT of having trained talent available. In this respect New Zealand should consider the example set by the Scandinavian countries in their use of trained artists and craftsmen in presenting a national — and international — image. But this desirable state of affairs can not, and will not, happen as a kind of by-product of industrial promotion.

Creative vitality and richness of imagination need an environment that permits its development. Yvonne Rust knows this, and is well qualified to start such a school on its way. It should be clearly understood that this proposed school is a first of its kind for N.Z., being a first venture in training young potters to a professional level. It is not a purely local enterprise for the West Coast only, but designed to fill a need on a national scale.

Did "The Potter" hear someone say "but can we afford it?" Lord Goodman, Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, speaking at Arts Conference 70 had the answer when he said: "I am totally partisan in the belief that a society without art is not a society worth living in—that when a country says that it is too poor to be able to indulge itself in these matters I can only say it will be a great deal poorer if it doesn't indulge itself in these matters."

N.Z. POTTERS GUILD SUMMER SCHOOL

The Guild will be holding a Summer School at the Waimea Potteries, Richmond, Nelson, for six days, commencing Tuesday, 28th December, 1971.

Students will be limited to 30, comprising 3 groups of 10.

Tutors to be announced later.

Fees $30.00.

Enquiries:

The Secretary,
N.Z. Potters Guild,
Reikorangi R.D.
Waikanae.

Tea Pot Exhibition

The N.Z. Potters Guild will present an exhibition of Tea Pots by members in the New Vision Galleries, Auckland from 7th to 18th June, 1971

Guest exhibitor: Len Castle

Selling through the Gallery—

THE MARKETING OF POTTERY IN SYDNEY

by John Stackhouse

From across the Tasman it is easy to fall into the trap of over simplifying the marketing of pottery in Australia's largest and busiest market place, the city of Sydney. From this distance one does get some perspective on the efficiency and economy of using a gallery to bring the pot to the buyer; the gallery gives a valuable pricing service, provides independent professional appraisal and bridges the awkwardnes of introducing a newcomer. It also reaches a range of casual or uninformed buyers who would never find their way to the kiln-side. But it would be a mirage to imagine Sydney as a mecca of selective buyers visiting spacious galleries to seek out the work of the finest ceramic artists and welcoming talented unknowns to the field.

The entry of new talent is a prominent feature of pottery in Sydney today. There has been considerable success in the development of the full-time certificate course at East Sydney Tec., now the major channel for the training of young potters in Australia. The course provides training with the highest standard of tuition and each year an appreciable number of skilled young potters graduate to join Sydney's professional craftsmen.

These talented young people, often with a background of experience in pottery at secondary school level and with the two years of specialised training, emerge with knowledge and experience comparable to many more years of bootstrap self improvement. The new generation is perhaps denied some of the outlook of their pioneer predecessors but this is balanced by the strength of their confidence and the assurance that there is an honoured place in the community for the ceramic craftsman.

A factor in the development of marketing pots in Sydney is the growing strength of the workshop and gallery, organised by the Potters Society of Australia. This is a co-operative organisation providing a regular outlet to a sophisticated buying public. Here the worker is associated with the disposal of his product. It has been a positive venture in its stress on potters standards in the wares displayed, and in the establishment of confidence in the buying public. It would be unfortunate if this led to a syphoning off of choice work leaving a residue to be disposed of by commercial galleries.

Potters find a satisfaction in kiln-side selling; it builds a social contact with customers, strengthens the market and has the virtue of rounding out a complete process. It is also an extravagance of time and calls for special skills which all potters do not have. Much of the potters' time would be much better spent making pots.

Australian potters are plagued by one burden that has hardly been felt in New Zealand yet—the charity drive. Most of us belong to some sort of community and are associated with neighbourhood activities. A round-up of willing craftsmen has become a short cut to raising funds. Friends and neighbours will be in attendance and the drive takes on enough of the character of an exhibition to pressure the potter into wasting quality work in keeping his end up. It is to be hoped that

New Zealand potters will be able to resist this kind of pressure.

The ceramics field in Australia is growing in knowledge and sophistication. Buyers are being joined by those of the new trained graduates who do not become professionals and their influence is spreading. As in New Zealand almost everything sells. This gives each worker an individual freedom to choose the kind of work that suits him. He does not have to make 'coffee mugs, because they sell' It also indicates a need for each potter to find his own discipline in maintaining standards of quality, other than a requirement to satisfy the customer. In New Zealand's homogeneous country, the individual finds his development in the response of fellow potters. Australia is not just bigger. It is different in kind. It is quite feasible for a craftsman to become separated from the enlivening company of fellow craftsmen.

After a short and personal search into the pottery conditions in Sydney, two factors emerge to modify our rosy picture of marketing across the sea. You can't make a living in Sydney just selling pots. Supplies are irregular and potters still underestimate the time they can save and contacts they can build up when served by a professional outlet. Also few potters have the temperament and the skill to turn out a dependable production line.

There remains a temptation to hold on to some assisting income rather than push out the last step into the commercial market.

ADMITTING NEW MEMBERS TO THE SOCIETY

One aspect of the National Exhibition that those organising it have found burdensome in the past is the unpacking and dispatching of a large number of pots for selection from aspiring new members. It was therefore moved at the last Annual General Meeting that application for membership, although entailing the same submission of work for evaluation by appointed selectors, should in some way be separated from selection for the National Exhibition.

The final amendment to the rule now reads—

'Exhibiting membership shall be open to those who have had work accepted by selection at an Exhibition nominated by the Society, but the Society may appoint Commissioners to conduct admissions to Exhibiting membership at other times.'

This means that it is to be left to the Executive to decide when and where and by whom selection for membership shall be made.

The Auckland Studio Potters have offered to organise a suitable location and to undertake the local administration this year.

The original date suggested for the submission of work was the 15th of April but we have been asked to put this back to a date in July and we have agreed to do this.

An entry fee of $6.30 will be payable by each applicant and will become the subscription for the current year should that applicant become a member.

It is hoped to have a printed application form made readily available from craft shops as well as from local socities.

John Fuller,
President,
New Zealand Society of Potters.

THE POTTER IS INDEPENDENT

The *Potter* has no connection whatever with the New Zealand Society of Potters. It was, of course, the editorial committee of the *Potter* magazine that gave birth to the Society in 1963. Until last year the *Potter* was represented on the standing committee of the Society. It now has no affiliations which could be thought to hamper its ability to be objective and impartial in reporting and commenting on developments within the pottery movement and on the pots themselves.

Len and Ruth Castle

An exhibition in Rothmans Gallery gave Wellington people a chance to see Len Castle at his best. The impeccably arranged display of pottery and woven baskets showed off work of the highest quality. The photograph shown below is an example of a grouping of forms and colour (needing to be seen of course), that marked this exhibition.

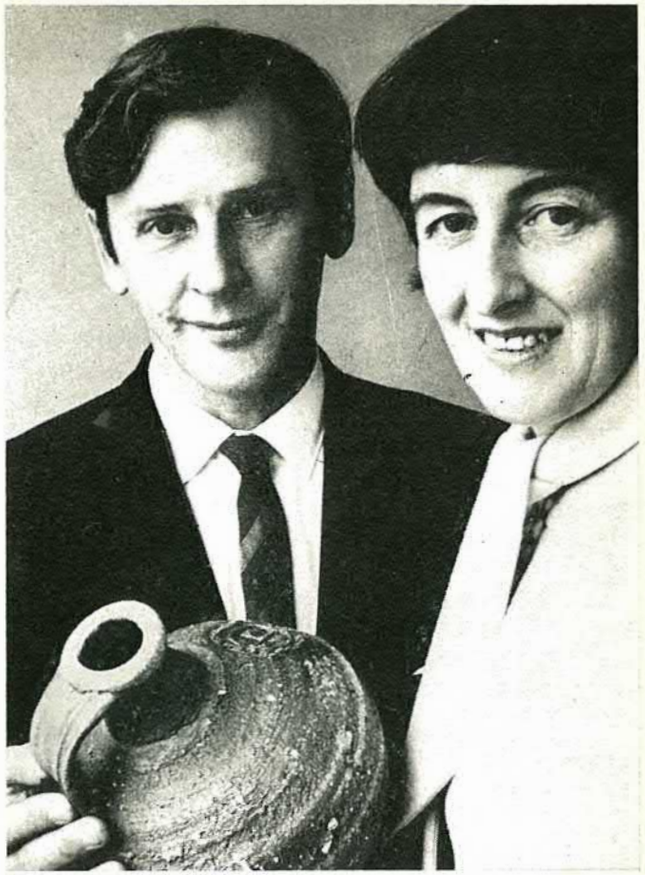
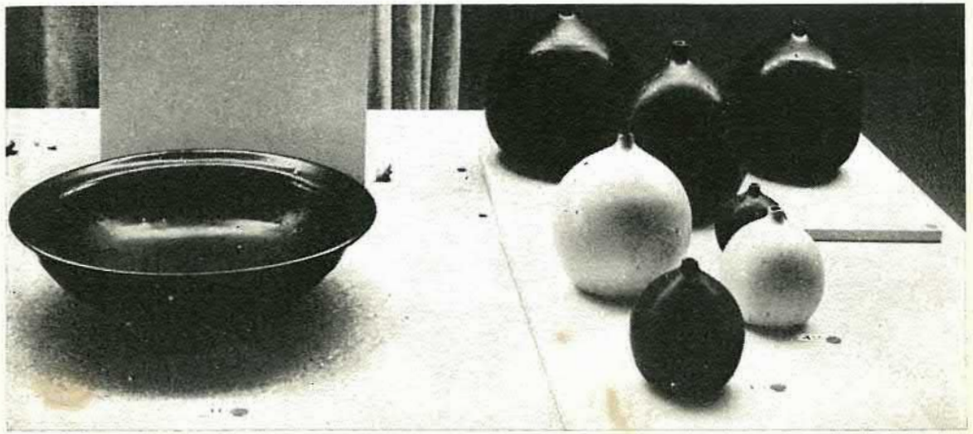
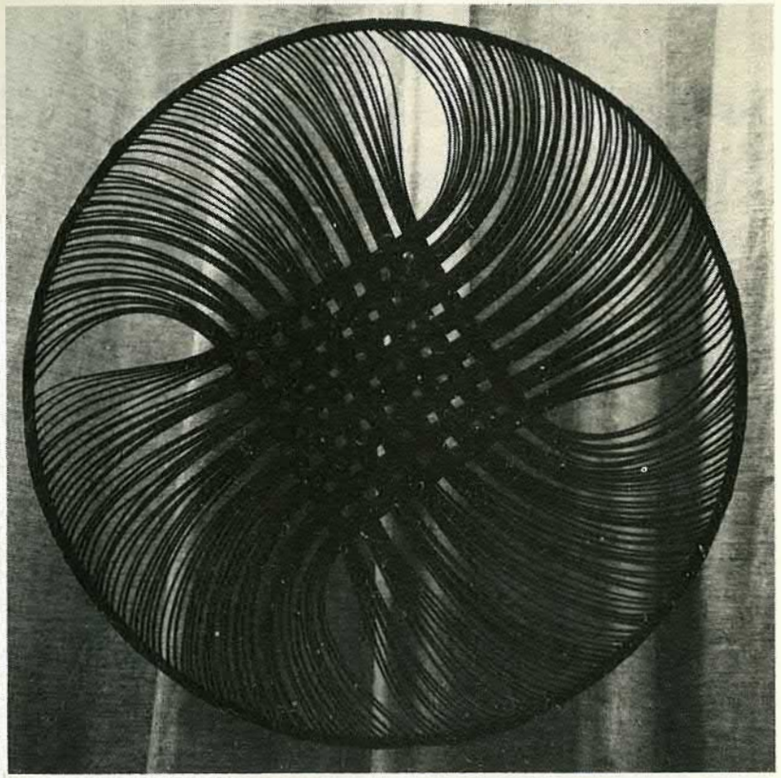


Photo: Evening Post

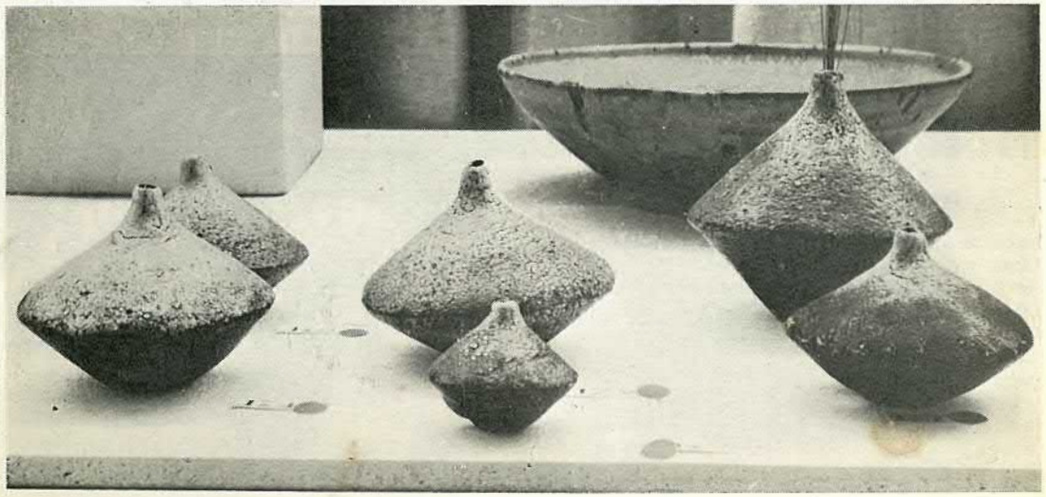


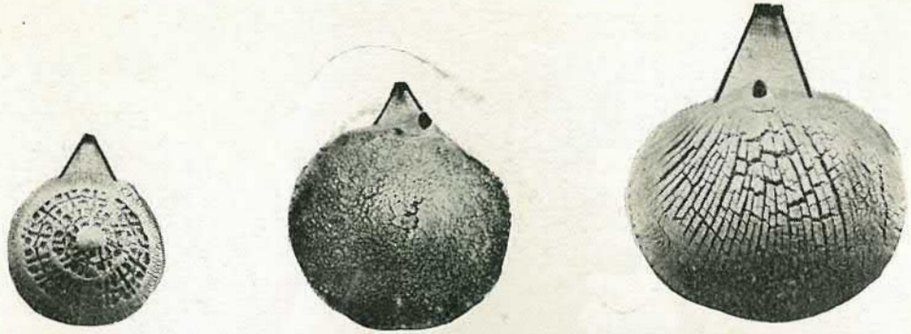
One of the woven baskets displayed by Ruth.

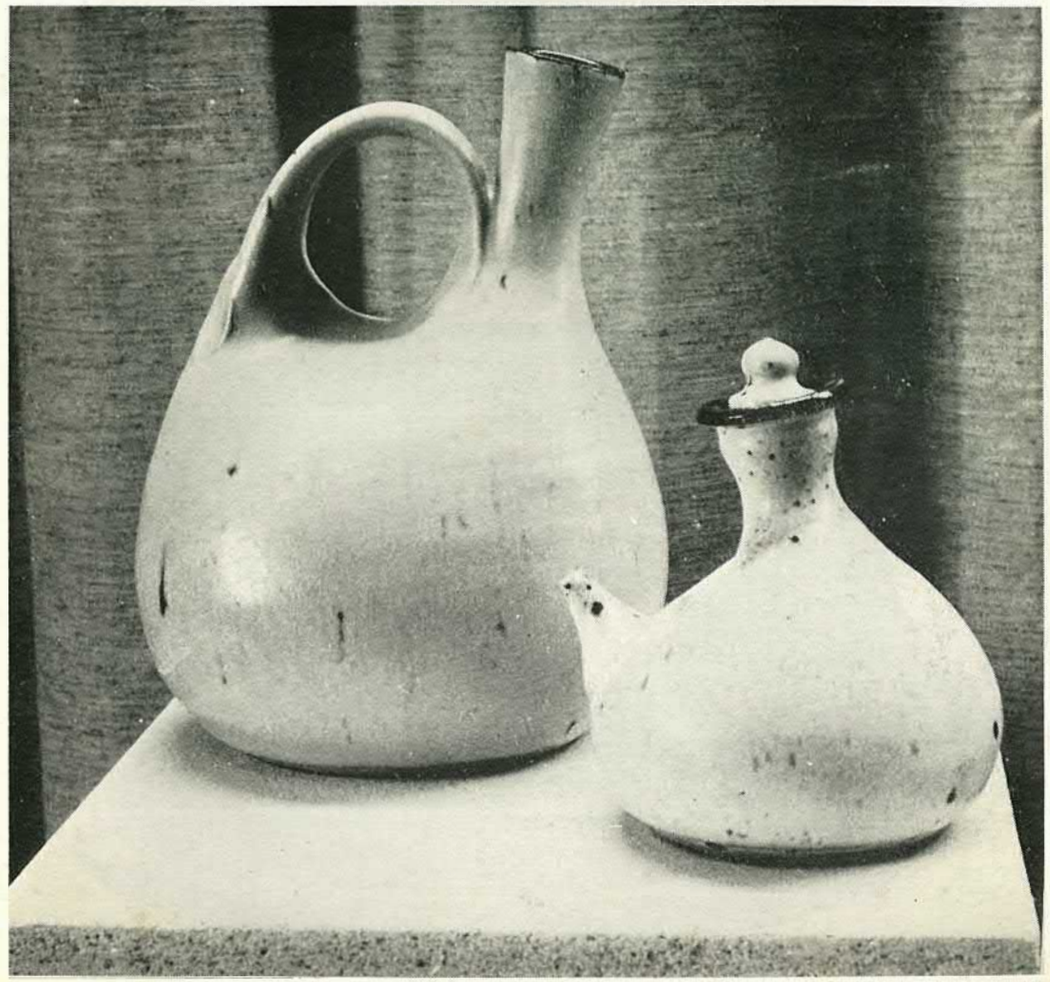


Some groups of Len's work.

Photos by Roy Cowan

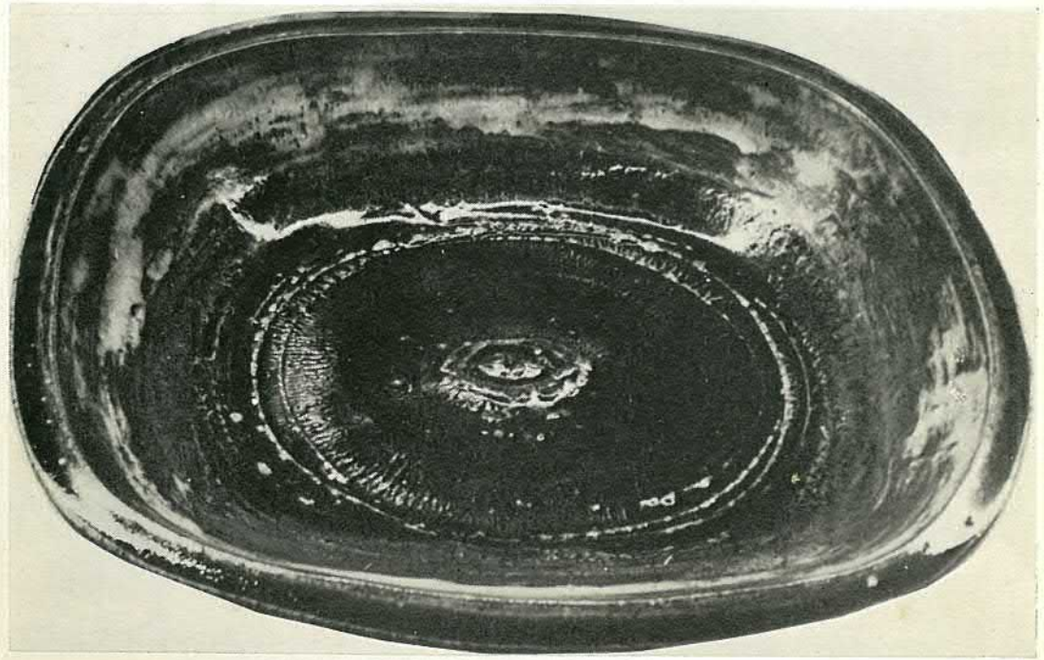






Photos: Roy Cowan

Further examples from Len Castle's exhibition at Rothmans Gallery.



Book Review

LIVING CLAY by Julie Evans and Harry Marchant. National Library of Australia Reg. No. Aus. 67-1853. Rigby Ltd. Adelaide. $A3.75.

When I ask myself, as a non-potter, whether I am qualified to review a book of this kind, I find myself, in rhetorical fashion, posing another question: 'Who else?' For this is a book which, as its introduction points out, seeks to satisfy the need for the ceramic processes to be explained in a way that beginners can understand. The extent to which it does this for someone like me is, I believe, a measure of its success. And succeed it does, simply because it does not attempt too much. Here, in clear and precise terms, with useful diagrammatic illustrations, is a practical step-by-step guide to the art of potting which could well become a Beginner's Handbook. All stages of the ceramic process from hand-forming methods to the more tricky techniques of throwing, glazing, firing and decorating are covered. A glossary of terms for the uninitiated, a series of plates showing completed pots (meant to encourage, not deter) and suggested work programmes for schools or groups, complete this attractive and well-presented book.

Perhaps one of the most satisfying aspects of this book is, as the title suggests, the quiet insistence throughout of clay as a living medium. We learn early that clay is an elusive substance with possibilities that 'lie unborn.' The would-be potter is encouraged to explore these possibilities and to discover for himself that sensitive, personal relationship which develops between the potter and his clay and which becomes manifest in the finished pot. The authors, wisely, do not attempt to teach design, but give examples only to stimulate the creative imagination.

The book, too, recognises many of the problems which have deterred people from taking up pottery-making and attempts to find solutions. It also has an eye to expense—always a consideration to a potter starting out. Various types of kilns and their capabilities come in for special mention, while I was delighted to be taken step-by-step through the process of forming and fixing a spout that was at once functionally adequate and good to look at. Having only observed these hitherto in the finished pot, I have always been a little awed at the skill and precision that goes into this all-important feature. Light is also shed on the mysteries of glazing, although the authors make no attempt to do more than cover essential points such as the different types, their behaviour and treatment, colourants, and how they will look when fired. Clear directions are also given for their preparation and application so that the newcomer can go ahead with some feeling of confidence.

As I said earlier this book is good because it does not attempt too much, or more than it sets out to do which is to guide and help beginners. The authors modestly assert that it cannot take the place of a good teacher. With this I can only agree, but for those who do not have access to a teacher, this helpful book would make a fine substitute. As an introduction and guide to a rewarding and satisfying creative activity, it can be warmly recommended.

Esme Marris

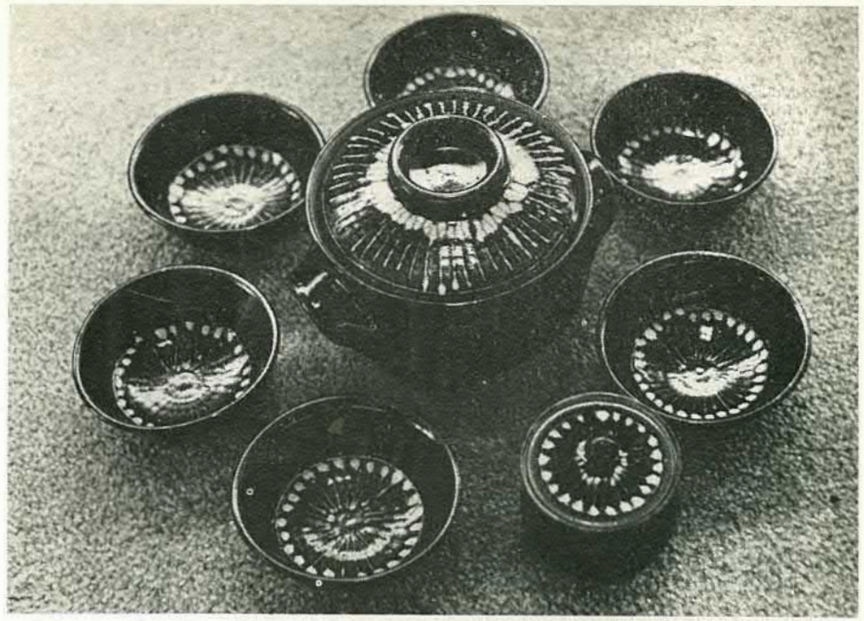
TIPPETT-SCHOLES EXHIBITION

Warren Tippet, Jeff Scholes and friend pose for the photographer.
At "The Potter's" request this photo was flown direct from Parnell to Wellington by carrier pigeon.

Warren and Jeff held a joint exhibition in Rothman's Gallery, Wellington Display Centre, in February this year.

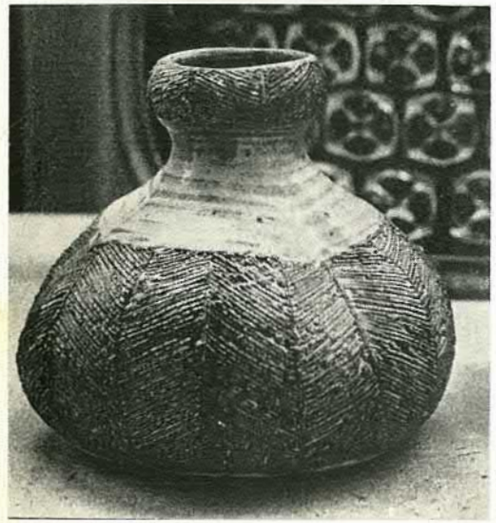
Designated a "Pot Show" by themselves, the following two pages show some of the work on view.

Photos:
Jeff Scholes



Jeff Scholes: Domestic Ware.

Below and right: Two pots by Warren Tippett



Pots by Jeff Scholes.
Below: Warren Tippett group.

Photos: Jeff Scholes

Potter from Ireland

Visiting earthenware potters has been one of the objectives during an Irish women's stay in New Zealand. Mrs Tomi Webb comes from Clifton in County Galway on the West Coast of Ireland (next stop Boston, U.S.A.), where she runs the Connemara Pottery. Conemara is not a county but a district between two hill ranges. The name suggests tweeds to those interested in crafts.

Connemara Pottery was established ten years ago in an old school house by Mrs Webb and her husband who moved to Eire from Northern Ireland because there was more incentive to build up their business in the south and because this was an area visited by tourists. Their trade is mainly with tourists through a dozen souvenir shops along the coast or from the showroom at the pottery.

The main aim is to make pottery with colourful glazes, so they work exclusively in earthenware. Local Irish clay is used, fired to high temperatures, 1150 to 1120 for ovenware casseroles, but the bulk of the ware is made from Dorset ball clay which is white and makes an ideal background for highly coloured glazes. The glazes are brought commercially, (it would be uneconomic to do otherwise)—a straight, transparent glaze into which pigments in powder form are mixed. Six basic colours have been worked out, all influenced by colours in the landscape; blue of the hills, green of the sea, purple of the heather (difficult), yellow of the gorse and brown of the peat bog. Mrs Webb says that the colours of the countryside must have an influence on travellers because its noticeable that they will choose yellow pottery in spring when the gorse is in bloom and red in high summer when the fuchsia hedges are in flower.

Nearby in Clifton is Millers factory where three generations of the Miller family have been making woollens. There are handlooms as well as power looms. Hanks of yarn made up in their own dyes drying on the corrugated iron roofs, a steam engine replaced but not rejected resting at the back of the factory and an elderly owner (he was in his eighties when the Webbs went there in the 1950s), was the picture until recently when the Irish Government did some rebuilding. Craft industries in Eire can get Government backing, but there are strings attached such as sales being directed overseas. Connemara Pottery preferred to be independent.

Mrs Webb is a long standing subscriber to the New Zealand *Potter*.

Colour and Clay

Until recent years pottery enthusiasts in Southland usually had to rely on going further afield to view exhibitions, but with the availability of a fine art room in the Southland Museum, potters and the public now have the pleasure of viewing and buying pieces in the atmosphere of a place which lends itself admirably to displaying handcrafts.

A number of Southland potters have successfully contributed to exhibitions throughout New Zealand, and some have held exhibitions on their own account, thus indicating the constant development in this activity.

During these years of progress, potters have been hindered by lack of suitable materials and places of work. But the drive to succeed despite these limitations, has urged the truly gifted and the plain battlers to show originality, together with a consistent willingness to turn failures into triumphs.

Thus it was that we were privileged to see and appreciate the very fine achievement in the work of two Invercargill women potters whose potential in this craft was revealed and ably presented in an exhibition under the title 'Colour And Clay,' which opened on November 21.

Frances Fredric and Olwyn Dykes have reached a standard worthy of recognition.

This exhibition was presented with sensitivity and assurance. The pottery was heightened in its colour and effect by the very pleasing work of the third exhibitor Julia Faithful, a water-colour artist and a talented exhibitor of several years standing. Her tastefully executed water colours, mostly from recent experiences in Mediterranean and Adriatic cities, plus some capricious pen and wash sketches, acted as a delightful tracery in rather a whimsical mood to set off the more purposeful aim of the pottery.

Viewing this exhibition, I could separate the different qualities in each potters' work. Frances is very much at home with the use of soft shades of glazes in blues and greens, as well as the earthy tones. There was also a striking copper blue matt glaze particularly effective on a textured or impresed surface. Her work ranged from small paper weights, pot-pourri jars (decorated Majolica style) small and large storage jars, curry bowls, plates, casseroles, large salad bowls, platters (some designed for wall hanging) to a wall panel and a thirty piece luncheon set in a muted shade of dark blue.

Olwyn showed restraint in her lesser use of glaze. Some of her pots revealed the clay texture, an aspect of pottery which is not as fully appreciated as it should be, but which can provide very pleasing results, as it shows the durability and disposition of the clay to advantage. This feature gave strength to the work, while supporting the glaze and its varied forms of application. She had explored the decorative qualities of glaze on glaze, and some of her platters featured interesting trailed and brushed decoration of a darker glaze. Solidity and decoration were thus harmoniously combined into products of utility and attractiveness.

As well, with both potters there was a feeling of moving away from the more conventional shapes, the tall flower containers, for instance, had been squared or flattened. Incised patterns were seen to advantage on these forms. While there was a combination of work from both potters, there was also a distinctness of style, which goes to show that two or more people can work together, assisting and supporting each other while at no time copying with deliberate consciousness the work of another. □

Eileen Latham

NEW ZEALAND POTTERS GUILD

The New Zealand Potters Guild has now been formed and is fully functional. The inaugural meeting was held on Saturday, October 10th, 1970, at Victoria University, and was chaired by Professor C. L. Bailey.

Many professional potters had felt for some considerable time, the need for an organisation which was concerned with their particular problems and which functioned in close relation to their particular involvement in their craft.

The aims and objects of the Guild are consistent with these needs and include the organising of special exhibitions, overseas contacts, bulk buying, pottery schools, etc.

An extensive programme has already been implemented and the Guild is rapidly gaining co-operation from other organisations.

Secretary. Wilf Wright,
Reikorangi,

Left: Gandalf the Grey (homage to Tolkein), twenty inches high, earth grey stoneware.

Right: Flower child.

On cover: Maori girl.

By Margaret Harris

Photos: K. E. Niven

Sculptors in clay
– firing to Cone 10

Lorna Ellis and Muriel Moody are both sculptors working in ceramic material. They are linked together for this article because they have a good deal in common; they are of an age, they are both deeply committed artists, they both have an actual and spiritual affinity with growing things which comes through in their work (sometimes their figures grow cacti and African violets out of their hair), and they have regular work sessions together sharing Bruce and the late Lee Thompson's kiln—but their sculpture is very different.

LORNA ELLIS

Lorna Ellis has not been firing clay for long—for about four years when she was invited to use the Thompson kiln. For her it has been a new discipline that she finds most rewarding. She is foremost a sculptor. Her chief sculptural commissions are for portraits. This is demanding work, especially when the subjects are children. To obtain a likeness, and a composed and aesthetically satisfying object in the distracting atmosphere of working with a small child is a considerable strain. Lorna Ellis finds the kiln work a welcome relief. She quickly points out that ceramic sculpture is no less demanding artistically, or is of secondary importance. Rather it is different and complementary to her other work, presenting a different set of problems. But there is not the same urgency to complete the task. It can even be allowed to gather a little dust.

Her ceramic work consists of stoneware and terra cotta heads of children; unglazed and rubbed with oxides, and two dimensional slabs. The largest slabs are tiles (up to 14" x 11"), put together to form panels. Leaves, flowers and birds are favoured decorative motifs. She enjoys getting colour by blending bottle glass and oxides. This technique of getting colour on small shallow dishes gives unpretentious and particularly pleasing results. The large sculptured panels which she makes by laminating fibreglass are burnished with aluminium or bronze to give patina. When the design calls for colour she inserts ceramic sections into these panels.

Lorna Ellis has benefitted from formal art training. For three years she attended the Wellington Art School then attached to the Technical College. She looks back with some gratitude for the training in life drawing classes where students were expected to attend for hours on end with only pencil and paper to work with.

When talking to Lorna Ellis in the tranquil atmosphere of her own house and looking at the objects she chooses

Lorna Ellis works on a clay model to be cast. Behind are terra cotta portraits.

Photo: K. E. Niven

to live with, and the colours and textures used (it was not surprising to see leaf pattern designs on curtain material), it is interesting to reflect on the question of how truly a house reflects the character of the people who live there. Obviously this question is not always valid since many people do not own their own house and usually some accumulation of material objects is implied. In the case of Lorna Ellis the house provides a background that fits her. Designed by an architect it lies along the ground at the bottom of an ampitheatre of greenery, in a heavily treed part of the Wellington suburb of Khandallah, where whole walls of glass bring the outside inside in the right places. One can recognise in this setting the qualities of calmness, method, a willingness to grapple with difficult tasks and see them through to the end, that are the motivating forces of her creativity.

MURIEL MOODY

Muriel Moody is well established as a potter. Although she enjoys making large plates, glazing and decorating pots, her interest and her reputation are in her ceramic sculptures. People are what interest her most. 'People are what living is about'. With the warm outgoing personality of the listener, the mother, the provider, it is not surprising that most of her sculptures are of figures — often mother and child or family groups.

She says that good design is the first objective in her work. She conceives an idea, then makes it. She is not restricted by the anatomy of the figure, nor does she feel restricted by clay as her material. Her early sculptures were metal, intended for casting then she switched to clay because it was cheaper, and because it was a more plastic and fundamental material to work with. She confesses that at first she regarded clay just as a material—a means to an end. As she worked with it she started to appreciate its feel and admire its capabalities. She gets great excitement from putting her work to the mercy of the kiln, 'There's nothing to do but wait for it and its always a great thrill.' For sculpture the glazing is played down. She uses mat glazes or rubs in oxides because reflected light would destroy the design. The blue/grey glaze she uses most, is not intended to imitate weathered bronze, but is a colour she likes. Otherwise she uses glazes in tones matching the lichens and moss found in the bush.

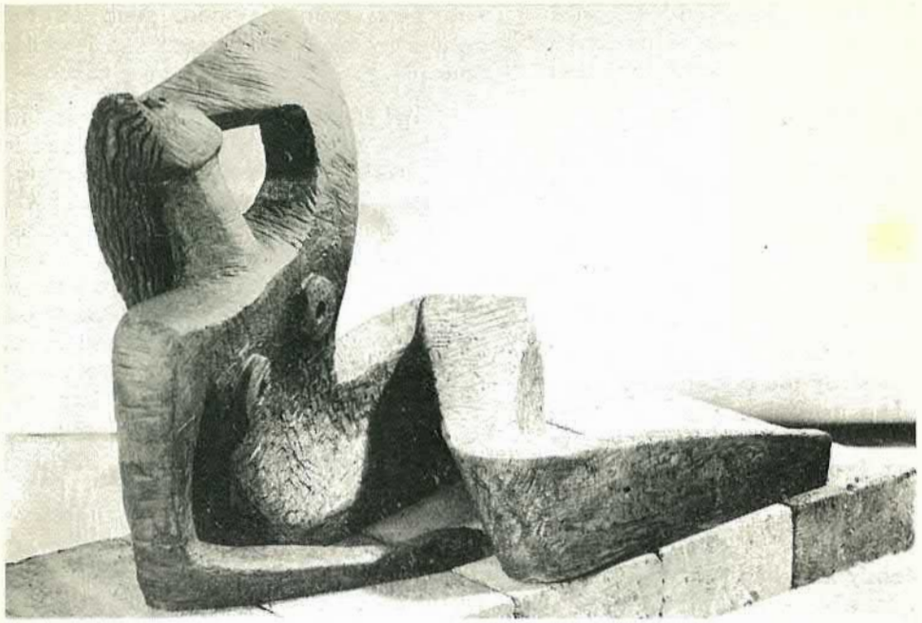
Muriel Moody also had formal full time Art School training and became a competent drawer and etcher before a sculptor; a background which she values. But undoubtedly the greatest influence was the eight years spent abroad in Egypt, India, Ceylon and Japan while working for the British YWCA Welfare Service. She was fascinated and never repelled by the mass of humanity in these countries. As well as being drawn to the people individually, she was thrilled by the way they grouped and massed. Even the hysteria of the mob she found stimulating after coming from a predictable and gentle country. She has lasting memories of 'women sitting around in great heaps.' All this has influenced her sculptures of groups. Of course it was a wonderful opportunity to absorb the artistic background of these countries. She was moved to take lessons in sculpture.

Her work is found in private houses (figures, animals, bowls), in art galleries and public places (larger sculptural pieces), and in buildings for which work has been commissioned, such as the twelve by eight foot mural she is doing now.

Muriel Moody also fits her background. She lives at the end of a bushy road in Days Bay on the east side of Wellington Harbour. The basement studio and the living rooms above are in ordered disarray. 'Time for living won't wait, time for tidying up will wait.' Colourful paintings on walls, grand piano in corner, white cat asleep on cushion, stuffed schnapper (caught by young son), on Len Castle platter, show where the Moody interests lie. Bob Moody semi-retired, is now potting in his own studio.

Muriel Moody

Photo: Lintz



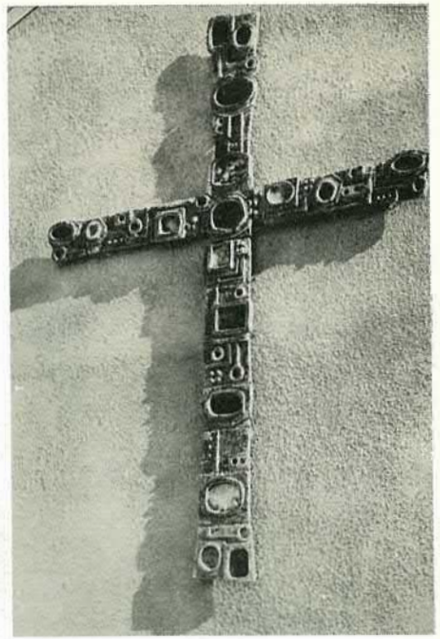
Photos: Lintz Photographers Ltd.

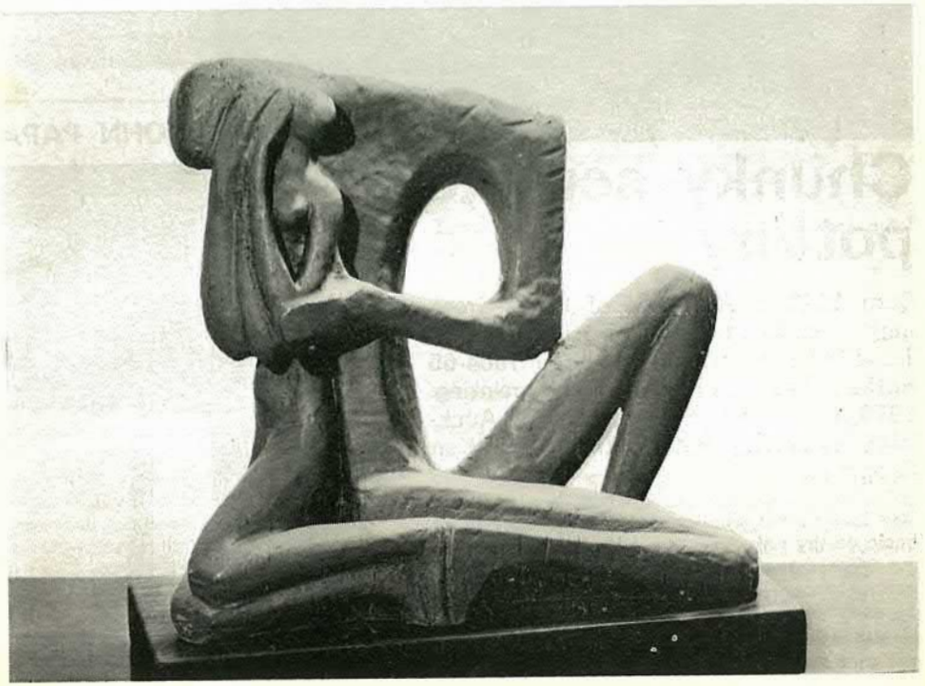
When Muriel Moody talks about her work she is enthusiastic and lighthearted. It has a lyrical quality: it is set to music. One might be tempted to think that her things just happen; but no artist producing work of this quality leaves much to chance although hers might be the inspirational rather than the methodical approach. Similarly her work might at first seem mainly simple fun, but that would be a superficial interpretation. Her work speaks strongly and has to be noticed, deriving this quality from the interest in line, the vigorous personality and the sense of purpose of the hand that made it.

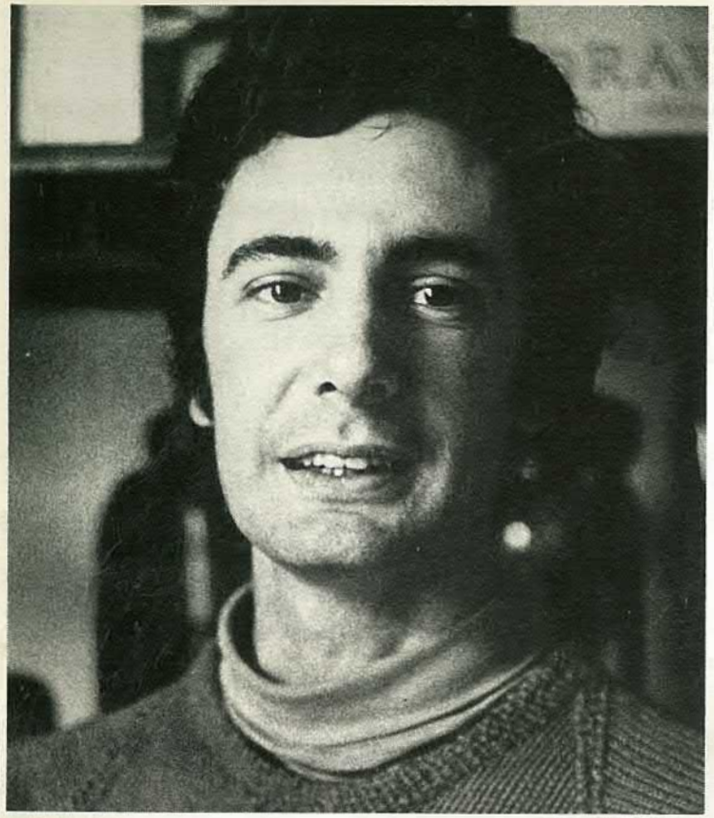
Left: Girl in the sun, unglazed rubbed with iron oxide, twenty-four inches high, a real feat of firing.

Bottom left photograph shows the figure in the biscuit chamber.

Top right: Stoneware cross, twenty feet high, fired in segments. Marsden School chapel. Below: Couple, fourteen inches high.







1. *Stoneware, black/ brown, white/black*

2. *Totem, stoneware, golden brown/white ochre*

3. *Totem, stoneware, stark white/blue brown*

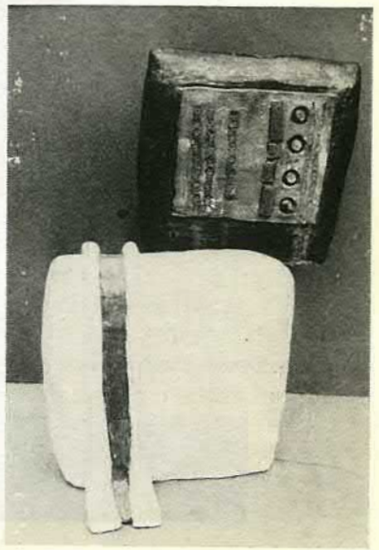
JOHN PAPAS

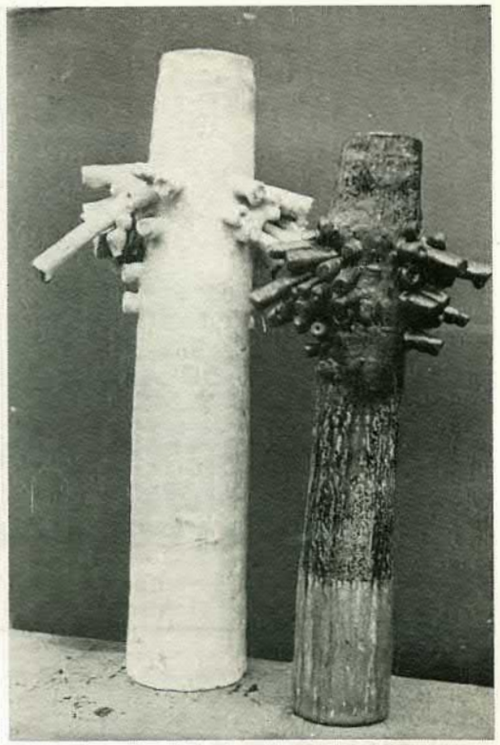
Chunky sculptural pottery

Born 1942 in Auckland of Scots-Greek parentage. Self taught as a painter-potter. Travelled extensively in Europe 1964-65 furthering studies in pottery and painting. 1970 worked with Patricia Perrin in Auckland, exhibiting with Patricia and Ken Chapman.

'My love of the chunky sculptural pottery is its basic earthy link. Its hand crafted nature moves me more than the super-refined, factory look. I cannot accept the idea of copying Chinese or Japanese ceramics.

'My new 1971 work is closely linked with the landscape. In glaze treatment I bring forth a painterly quality.'





BOUQUETS

Many people have encouraging things to say about The New Zealand Potter. One of the recent bouquets was from The Museo National de Bellas Artes, in a letter to the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand thanking them for the copy the council had sent them. (QE II takes two hundred copies of each issue for distribution overseas.) They said the New Zealand Potter had made a favourable impression in Italy and they wanted back copies.

Another unsolicited comment came from a visiting overseas subscriber who was quoted in a daily newspaper as saying that the New Zealand pottery magazine was the best available, anywhere.

And a Tennessee subscriber wonders if we will publish monthly. (Gasps of horror from editor and others who work on behalf of the *Potter*.)

Who are our readers?

We printed sixteen hundred copies of last issue and were sold out within three months. The circulation is growing. There are now one hundred and thirty Australian subscribers and twelve in Britain, which doesn't take into account those sold to shops. Our reputation spreads in North America. There are twenty-five subscribers in the United States and Canada. Eire, Uganda, Denmark, Japan, Taiwan, South Africa and France are other countries appearing on the addressograph.

The stuff potters are made of

Margaret Milne

Briar Gardner, pioneer 1879-1968.

Briar Gardner, christened Maria Louisa, the second daughter of John and Louisa Gardner, was born at Hobsonville in 1879 at the residence of her maternal grandparents, Mr and Mrs Rice Owen Clark. Her home was at Mataia Estate, Gloritt, on the Kaipara Harbour, but she spent a great deal of her youth at Hobsonville. One of her first trips to Hobsonville was on horseback with her father and brother—there were no roads, only tracks through the bush and scrub. In her diary she gives a very vivid description of that journey and the condition she arrived in. Her brother, of course had the saddle and stirrups, and she hung on to him, her legs hanging loose and rubbed raw. Her father, seeing how uncomfortable she was, stopped and made her a pair of stirrups out of flax which made her ride more comfortable. Grandfather Clark, who was farming at Hobsonville, went to England to see his brothers Edwin and Latimer Clark, engineers, who were in partnership with Robert Stephenson (a brother of George, who invented the steam engine). They were the engineers for the Britannia Railway Bridge over the Menai Straits. As a result of the visit, Mr R. O. Clark arrived back with a machine for making pipes to drain his farm.

This was not Briar's first introduction into burning clay, as on the farm her father had burned it by piling it on huge mounds of wood and then firing the logs. The clay was broken up to make roads around the farm. This helped make the farm more acessible in the winter time.

Mr Clark started to make pipes to drain his farm at Hobsonville and the result was so successful that neighbouring farmers asked to buy some. Thus was born the large pipe industry at Hobsonville owned by Mr R. O. Clark and his sons. Briar spent hours watching the clays being mixed, then put through the pipe machine, dried, then burned, and afterwards salted, to make the beautiful brown glaze.

In the meantime, her brothers at Glorit were experimenting with clay on the farm and made their first bricks for the Tahikeroa tunnel, a long tunnel between Helensville and Whangarei.

About 1900, John, Charles, R. O. (Tonks) and Peter moved to New Lynn and bought a block of land bounded by the Great North Road, Titirangi Road, Margan Avenue and Matai Avenue; and together with Mr William Parker began brickmaking, and so founded the firm of Gardner Brothers and Parker.

Briar came down to look after her brothers, and of course heard lots of talk of clay mixtures, and so on but it was not until 1926, when her brothers employed a man trained in the Doulton Works, that she turned her hand to pottery and had instruction in throwing the clay and using the wheel. She became so keen that often she rose at 5 a.m. to get in two hours practice before the works started at 7.10 a.m. A small kiln was built in the garden and she proceeded to throw, burn and glaze her pots. This entailed working long hours — often staying up all night to burn the kiln which was fired by coal. During the depression, when it was difficult to import glazes, she did a tremendous amount of research into pottery of ancient times and gave lectures on pottery on the radio and to different organisations.

Briar Gardner was a most versatile person. Her embroidery, crochet and tapestry were exquisite. Possesed of abundant vitality and with a zest for all she undertook, when no longer able to do her pottery she went to

Australia at the age of 72 and took her Diploma in Speech and Drama, lectured on the radio on pottery and even took part in a film! A member of the Lyceum Club, she took an active part in the Drama Circle. She also took lessons in German.

Her pottery can be found all over New Zealand and is prized by those who are fortunate enough to possess it. Her pieces are notable for strength of line, and imaginative use of colour. As containers for flower arrangements they are unrivalled.

In her latter years, her chief interest — apart from teaching speech — was caring for her extensive garden. This she did until a few months before her death, In October, 1968, at the age of 89 years. □

14th EXHIBITION

The 14th New Zealand Potters Exhibition will be held in Christchurch at the Canterbury Society of Arts gallery opening on September 18th, 1971.

The selectors are Harry Davis, Len Castle and Warren Tippett.
Christchurch are making a big effort with this exhibition and hope for wide support from all eligible potters.

OPPORTUNITY

The Edmonton Potters' Guild seeks a well qualified instructor to take charge of its workshop and instruct its members, duties to commence in September, 1971. Membership in five classes per week of four hours duration is 75. Salary, by arrangement, will include paid holidays, use of materials and facilities and regular increments. Please direct applications to: Mrs. Mary Collier, The Edmonton Potters' Guild, P.O. Box 3065, Postal Station A, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

An arts crawl through Australia

by Doris Holland

My five-week visit to Australia took me to Sydney, Canberra, Alice Springs, Adelaide and Melbourne. This is a concise review from my diary notes.

SYDNEY: Arrived accompanied by Mrs Ngaire Hewson of Several Arts Gallery, Christchurch. Made full use of our eight days in this fascinating city. Visited just about all of the many art galleries. One of the highlights of the trip was the Power Bequest Collection of contemporary art at the University of Sydney, as this is an international collection of painting, graphics and sculpture. Two of Sydney's old buildings house Art Schools (a third, an old bakery closed just prior to our arrival), and another the enormous old, stone garrison near the city side of the bridge has recently been converted into the Argyle Arts Centre, an outsize Brown's Mill. Nearby, also under the bridge, in the old mining museum is the Julian Ashton Art School founded in 1890 and still retaining conservative teaching methods and a fascinating atmosphere of a past era.

Was surprised at the number of foremost Australian artists who had studied at this school where the old disciplines still prevailed. Incidentally, from here, looking over the harbour, had the most enchanting view of the opera house, floating like a huge white butterfly on the sparkling blue water of the bay. The East Sydney Technical College combining the National Art School and the Pottery School is in the impressive old stone jail. Were lucky enough at least to see over this big pottery school where senior students have their own studios on a mezzanine (an old prison gallery). Unable to contact Peter Rushforth, head of the pottery school, and patron of the Ceramic Study Group formed by ex-students. Another happy excursion in Sydney was a visit to Sutherland and Ivan McMeekin. His house is beautifully situated amongst the native bush at Waronah. He had just completed and not yet fired, a new wood burning kiln fitted with a bottle gas booster. His fuel was a large stack of neatly cut telegraph posts supplied by the P and T Department. Ivan employs a student to help him. One of her main problems is to learn the difficult art of raw glazing as his pots are fired only once.

Another morning taken by a friend of Ngaire's to visit the studio-shop of Ivan and Patricia Englund, quaint two-storied building on the corner of Cascade Street, Paddington. Never seen so much of interest in so small an area. The two Englunds both pot and paint, Ivan also teaches and Patricia runs the little gallery. In Paddington too are four of Sydney's best dealer galleries, the Bonython, Gallery A, Rudy Komons and Barry Sterns—all showing first rate exhibitions. Finally on Saturday afternoon searched out Bourke Street and the Pot Shop, headquarters of the Australian Potter's Association. Found a spacious and well stocked display area for selling and a potter's class going on at the back. Some one hundred students attend classes here in a well equipped workshop with several kilns, electric for earthenware gas for stoneware.

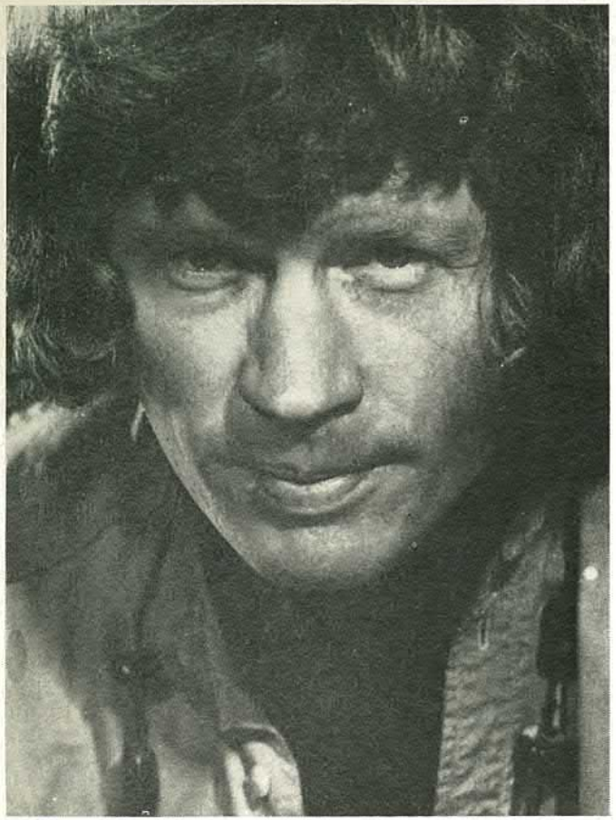
CANBERRA: Parted from Ngaire, fortunate in being able to contact Margaret Frankel, now Lady Frankel, previously of Christchurch, and a potter of long experience. She has a neat bottle gas kiln in the garden, fitted while I was there with two new burners. Bottle gas is reasonably economic in Australia and is excellent for potters not wishing to cope with oil, but not satisfied with electricity. Found Canberra an unusual and interesting city. Saw an exhibition presented by the Commonwealth of contemporary Australian painting (terrific show) and the well known Leonard French seven days of creation series of paintings displayed floodlit in a darkened room. French also designed the stained glass windows in the National Library. The library also has a large Tom Bass sculptural panel over the main entrance. Nearby is the Henry Moore figure and across the park gushes the Norma Redpath fountain.

ALICE SPRINGS: Five days here busy sight seeing this fantastic territory where the infinite landscape varies in colour from cream, pink and orange to bright, brick red. All is textured with scrubby growth and the strange ghost gums immortalised by Albert Namatjira show whitely against purple mountains.

ADELAIDE: Very taken with Adelaide Art Gallery which has a spendid ceramic section (especially Greek and ancient Mediterranean pottery). Saw work of two Australian potters unknown to me—Ian Smith* (stoneware and raku) and Bill Gregory's strange coloured stoneware, non functional I would guess, but most inventive.

MELBOURNE: Spent a great deal of time at the Victoria Art Centre studying original drawings old and new stored in the Graphic Department where Dr Ursula Hoff and Miss Shona Deane were kind and co-operative and gave me free access to this marvellous collection. Much of the contemporary pottery was stored (permitted to see what I could) to make space for another exhibition. Of interest, a large figure painted Picasso vase, and greatest joy, many exquisite pieces of Oriental, Persian and ancient pottery and ceramics displayed in the ethnic gallery. Of particular interest too, was a large retrospective exhibition of pioneer Australian potter Stanislav Halpern (also painter and sculptor) who died in 1969. The attractive Toorak Gallery had a one man show from Marea Gazzard with her usual large textured global and slab forms. Liked best the smaller pieces using concave shapes which I thought more satisfactory than some of the larger pots. Prices high by our standards (ours low by theirs!) and most were sold. Conveniently near in Toorak Road is the Arts and Crafts Centre, well stocked with desirable pots from which I chose after much thought, a large Les Blakeborough lidded jar with feldspathic grey glaze over a slightly exposed reddish ground—very handsome but a problem to transport! Returned to Christchurch with bulky baggage.

*See New Zealand Potter Vol. II/I (editor).



Award to Peter Yeates

Peter is currently the holder of a Q.E. II Arts Council award in the class of assistance to artists and craftsmen undertaking creative projects within New Zealand.

For me to write about ceramic assemblies is perhaps like a writer making clay models of his prose—why not?

These forms mimic natural growth patterning procedures. The negative space contained by the positive elements in the forms excite me. They invite further positive-negative space exploration. I get strong feelings of life, growth, repetition, regeneration.

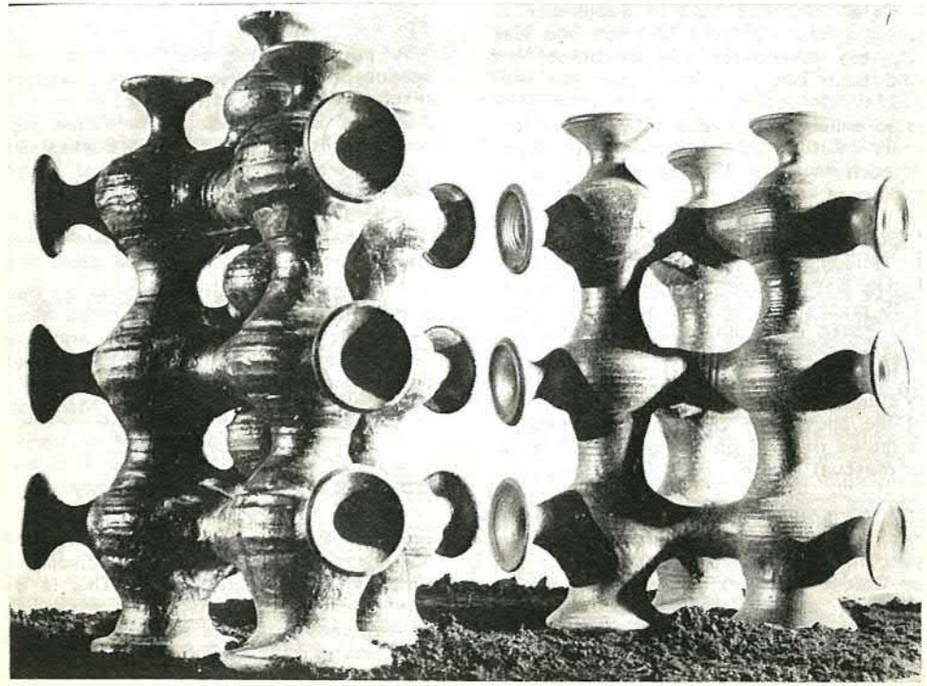
The borders between pottery and sculpture have been argued. I think there are many aspects integral to both. To think a series of component shapes into an integrated form perhaps allies more to sculpture. I don't think it is important. High fired stoneware is a very beautiful material and the story etched by fire on the surface of complex forms add further to a high visual content.

Looking into molecular architecture I find immensely stimulating. Discovering the structures and basic units which have been used to manifest the material world would seem the greatest guide to building forms of integrity.

I enjoy these things most outside, and like to try them against a natural environment. It would be good to see our efforts used more to decorate public as well as domestic environments.

Recent work by Peter Yeates

Photos: Christopher Sawtell



NEWS OF PEOPLE, POTS & EVENTS

Auckland Studio Potters

There have been two big events for the Auckland Studio Potters in the last six months. The Kenneth Clark visit, and the Auckland Studio Potters exhibition.

I do not intend to dwell too much on the Kenneth Clark workshops, as he went to other centres and did much the same thing in each, but I would like to say how much we enjoyed and were stimulated by his visit. His exhibition at the New Vision Gallery was very successful; it was colourful and gay and quite different from anything we have seen here before. He encouraged those who studied with him to experiment boldly with design and colour rather than with our usual pre-occupations with shape and texture, and left us with a whole new world of exciting new possibilities to explore.

The other big event of the year, the Studio Potters Exhibition, was held in September at the Auckland War Memorial Museum and was nearly as big as the National Exhibition that was held there last year. We began our new policy of inviting potters and groups from other regions to send guest exhibits, by inviting the Canterbury Potters Association and Barry Brickell each to send exhibits of 20 pots or groups of pots.

The Canterbury Potters Association sent 18 exhibits including one or two pots by most of their leading potters. Barry Brickell's exhibit was one of 15 pieces ranging from some very large works of coiled sculpture based on pot forms, to a small 'engine' pot.

Barry's exhibit was without question the highlight of the show, and with the other exhibits drew a crowd of 5000 on the opening Sunday, another museum record.

One of our group evenings was a film evening which included among other things several interesting home-made films. One was the film of Briar Gardner at work, which was made in the twenties, another the film of the John Kingston weekend school held earlier this year. On a rather more professional level was the film commissioned by Helen Mason of Bernard Leach's visit to the home of Len Castle.

□

Doris Dutch

Doris Dutch had all five of her entries accepted for the International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art at Faenza, Italy. Three of these were included in the catalogue illustrations.

Arts and the Community have arranged for Trevor Bayliss of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, to edit the section of the magazine which relates to pottery, weaving and the decorative arts.

The Little Festival of the East Coast Bays, featured the firing of raku kiln by Ngaire and Ray Scott, and guest potters John Parker and Peter Knuckey gave demonstrations of throwing.

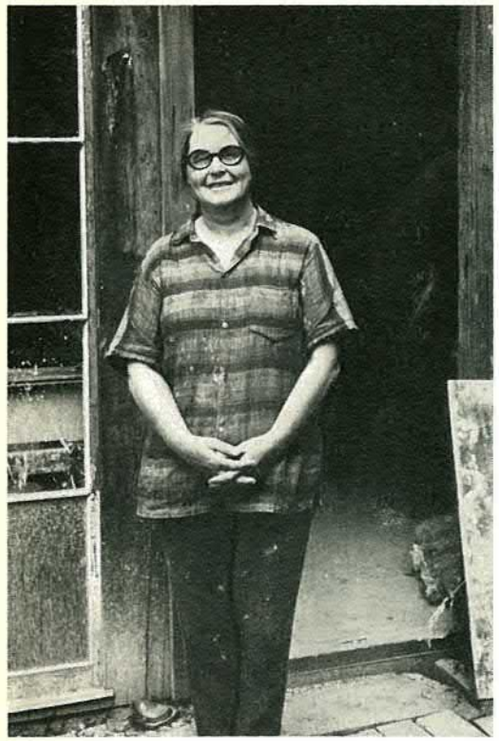
A pre-Christmas raku and barbecue party produced some unusual ceramic and culinary results, when past and present members of the Auckland Studio Potters Committee met over the fires. Trevor and Marjorie Bayliss lent their garden which provided an ideal setting for two raku kilns and two barbecues. Most of the members who had served on the committee during the last ten years were there and enjoyed good weather, good firing and good sausages.

Tauranga Potters Group wound up their year with a picnic at Guy and Jocelyn Mountain's pottery at Katikati. Fine weather and the president's surprise contribution of chicken and champagne made this a perfect outing. □

Margaret Milne

Success for Nelson Art Display

Four and a half thousand people, many of them holidaymakers, visited a craft display at the Suter Art Gallery in January. This is the first time such a display has been arranged in the holiday season. It was so successful that there are plans to do it again.



Helen Mason, a former editor of the N.Z. Potter, stands in the entrance to her pottery in the Waitakeres, near Auckland.

Photo: Bob Moody

News from Dunedin

This last half year has seen a great advance in the Otago Potters Group. There is evidence of a number of young people working hard, and of a willingness of these same people to take a share in the running of the group. The workshop is busier than it has ever been, and the kiln is going most of the time. The Group's annual exhibition in the Otago Savings Bank reflected this increase in activity both in the number and quality of pots submitted. For a local group showing, where each member who submitted pots was represented in the final selection, this was a good effort and showed evidence of co-operation and pooling of knowledge between members. However, both in this exhibition and the Festival Week Exhibition in which the Group took part along with other members of the Visual Arts Branch of the Dunedin Civic Arts Council there was a tendency for the pots of people working together to be indistinguishable which would be acceptable if potters remained anonymous. Good workmanship alone is not enough for a really worthwhile product in this machine age, and in all the crafts IMAGINATION is a necessary adjunct for the work to be really worth doing; and this does not mean the use of gimmicks.

We had an important exhibition in the Art Gallery in December and January. This was an exhibition of International Prints and Pots—the pots got together from local collectors. The pots were beautiful although there was an overload of New Zealand work for an International Exhibition, but the display seemed to be in competition with the pots themselves. Large branches of glossy greenery were put into pots never intended for such a purpose. Furthermore they were wired with bright copper wire, the wire being wrapped round and round what appeared to be beautifully made necks, lugs and handles. In one case a magnificent pot of Barry Brickell's with a cruciform neck had a large branch in it held vertical by feet of copper wire fastened to the wall some distance away. It may be the view of a purist, but many of these pots lost much of their dignity by this treatment, and every pot displayed was worthy to be seen as a complete statement in itself. To non-potters who display pottery, may I say—it is the pots we want to see, and in a way that they can be fully appreciated.

At the beginning of October, Dawson's Gallery held an exhibition of pots by David Brockenshire, and turned woodware by his wife, Noeline. David gave a demonstration in the workshop, showing us how he made the various forms and shapes in his exhibition, and left us all in a state of elation and enthusiasm, for here was a man able to communicate his great love of the material he uses, and his feeling for the shape, touch, texture and colour of the world around him. There was a great improvement in his glazes over anything else of his we have seen down here.

Anneke Borren's exhibition in 'The Connoisseur' in November was different and showed us a completely different sort of earthenware from from what we are accustomed to see. This was

the work of a potter who loves decoration and is very good at it; and who also manages to convey a great sense of fun into her work. There was a surprising variation in the quality of throwing evident in the large bowls many of which were badly warped, and relied on their decoration for success. I particularly liked her solitaire sets, which I found almost irresistible to play with. This exhibition followed by Kenneth Clark's visit must have been most inspiring to those potters wishing to decorate their ware. This is a branch of the craft of pottery which is not practised very much in Dunedin, and we could not have had better examples to set us on the way.

The Kenneth Clark workshop which admitted a limited number was from all reports a most inspiring weekend, leaving members with a fund of experience on which to draw. The workshops where the potters themselves have to make an effort and draw on themselves are very worthwhile, and must be very exhausting for those providing the situation. Both Kenneth Clark and the group worked under difficulties owing to lack of information from the New Zealand Society of Potters as to what preparation was required to make his classes a working success, until it was too late to prepare for them adequately. Every one of these visiting potters is so valuable to us and we are prepared to work so hard to make things as easy as possible that if arrangements from the source are inadequate or late, much that could be so good is lost both to them and to us.

Congratulations to Ian Gray-Smith who officially opened his pottery at Whare Flat during Festival Week at the end of January and who, with the help of friends, coped with many hundreds of visitors during that week.

This year looks as though it will be a rewarding one for the potters in and around Dunedin. More and more people who have started off in the workshop have advanced to the stage of getting their own equipment and more young people who appear to be likely to be dedicated to the craft are joining up. This year we are going to hold our annual exhibition in the foyer of the museum, and hope to put on show some really good work for there are now some of us who can be considered as established potters and are capable of producing really good pottery along with those who started a shorter time ago but who show a real feeling for the work. □

Beryl Jowett

Wellington News

An English earthenware potter, Clare Dawkins and her husband, a retired gas engineer, have been visiting New Zealand and staying with the Moodys in Days Bay. Two and a half months and not a drop of rain! They toured from the Bluff to North Cape in continual sunshine and were thrilled with the beauty of our country. Although it was not a good time to meet potters and see their work, they were impressed with what they saw of pottery in New Zealand. Bernard was naturally very interested in the development of natural gas in New Zealand. When they get home Bernard is going to build Clare a large gas kiln and she is going to make stoneware. They might return to live here.

Dorothy Ewart's talk on her visit to Japan and Doreen Blumhardt's talk on her experience of the pottery scene abroad were part of the programme for the beginning of the year. Later there was a goodwill visit to the potters in the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay.

Gwen Watts from Tauranga has joined the Wellington Potters and we look forward to seeing her work. □

Muriel Moody

Pottery Notes from Christchurch

Classes have started again with record enrolments. At least four of the big secondary schools are running night classes. One group has now put a limit of two year's tuition for each student thereby ridding themselves of a permanent waiting list. Presuming each town to be the scene of similar activity, this large nursery is surely a healthy sign for the growth of New Zealand pottery.

Before Christmas I had the pleasure of showing eight paintings with Len Castle's pots at the Colonial Gallery, Washdyke, Timaru. This little exhibition was beautifully presented and my large textured watercolours, mostly low toned, were most sympathetic with Len's pots. I drove down to Washdyke to see this show and as always, enjoyed the experience of seeing and handling Len's pots.

I'm giving an illustrated talk on my impressions of Australian art at the next association meeting and we are having an evening discussion with a visiting agent from Wengers. Plans for the September National Exhibition are now moving forward. □

Doris Holland

June Black beside her new kiln, built by Grant Hudson.

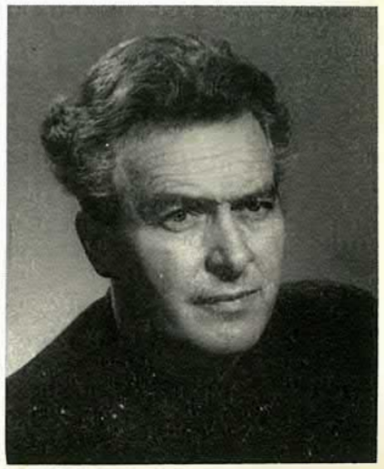
Right: June's recent pots and a painting in her Mairangi Bay home on the North Shore.

Photo: Bob Moody

OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT

Potters and friends of the New Vision Gallery will wish to congratulate Mr Kees Hos on his recent appointment as Programme Director for the new Art Department of the Gippsland Institute for Advanced Education at Newborough, near Melbourne.

This does not mean that New Vision is also moving across the Tasman. Far from it. Shop and gallery will continue under the capable management of Tine Hos, assisted by Mrs. Beatrice Grossman. In addition, Kees' frequent trips back should provide a regular link with current events in Australia which must be of benefit to us all.



True confessions: Now it can be told!

Potter readers are invited to make a clean breast of all funny or frightening incidents —read on . . .

MY WORST EXPERIENCE

by Muriel Moody

Once when I was a completely new chum at oil firing, Juliet Cowan left me in charge of the late Lee Thomson's kiln. The kiln is large, beside the basement which forms the studio; the living quarters are above. The kiln starts on two pot burners and has four other burners which need to be changed at the right time, and it has a large powerful blower which makes a sound like a hurricane.

To be left in charge of all this was like baby-sitting for the Longleat lions. I could only watch and pray.

Everything was going to plan when I was disturbed by the sound of a door opening upstairs. Burglars? No, just the Lord of the Manor, Bruce Thomson returning home unexpectedly and hungry. He suggested a glass, and from that moment I forgot my noisy charge downstairs while we made a meal.

In the course of the meal I pricked up my ears and realised that something was very wrong. There was an awful silence coming up the stairs. We rushed below. I had left the kiln with a rosy glowing interior well on the way to fruition and what I found was a sullen ,black cooling mass. The cheerful roar of the burners had stopped and I recognised that my charge was in desperate need of attention if it was to survive. Panic!!

It was no use looking up the doctor's book. I tried turning up all the jets. Tried adding more air through the vents. Tried everything else I could think of. Then it dawned on me. The kiln had run out of oil. Bruce and I rushed to the pump and refilled the tank from the oil drum. Alas—in my anxiety and haste I had left all the jets open and we were pumping oil straight into the kiln. The fat was in the fire. The kiln came alive again belching black smoke and flames in all directions. I was terrified and expected the house to go up at any moment. After an agonising few minutes the excess oil burned, I was able to adjust the jets and they settled down to burn evenly again. The scare was over. But the anxiety over the outcome had just begun. There was nothing to do but wait for two long days and nights.

I could hardly face turning up to the opening. I did, and surprise, surprise, it turned out to be the best firing we had had to date—the glazes well matured and the reduction perfect. With this experience I won the reputation of being the expert on reduction firing! □

THE ANIMATED POT

I first saw it heading across the lawn. I couldn't believe it. Thought it must have been the result of too much wine and rich food consumed at Christmas dinner. Later I thought I saw it again, only for a few seconds, before it merged into the mist and ghostlike forms of the shrubbery. It reappeared—absolutely no doubt about it this time—a pot with legs heading straight for me. I managed to reach the verandah before the pot disappeared under the house. I sat down, badly shaken. My mind began to explore the possible implications of what I had just seen. What if the whole house was alive with them. If every pot in the place had grown legs and was at this precise moment in time leaping gaily around, from room to room.

Here it came again. I could hear it approaching. It stopped at my feet. I grabbed wildly at the belly of the pot and lifted it up onto the verandah. There with its head firmly lodged inside the pot was the puppy the children had said was missing before breakfast. Unfortunately with apologies to one of our well known potters, the pot had to be broken to release the pup.

Janet Wright